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Publication Date

2011

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Political Thought and Political Action: Michael Walzer's Engagement with American
Radicalism

By

Jason Toby David Reiner

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Political Science

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Mark Bevir, Chair

Professor Shannon Stimson

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Professor David Hollinger

Spring 2011

Abstract

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This dissertation provides an account of the historical development of the political thought of Michael Walzer from the 1950s to the present day. It situates Walzer within an American tradition of social democratic thought and argues that only when he is so situated can his thought be understood fully. Walzer's engagement with that tradition, most notably through his work on *Dissent* magazine, has structured how he has responded to many of the major developments in political life over the course of his career, including the decline of movement politics, the rise of neoliberalism, the recent waves of immigration to the USA, and the increased salience of civil society following the demise of the Soviet Union.

Understanding Walzer in this way recovers the egalitarian aspirations of his theory, which are lost in those academic accounts that are inspired by analytic philosophy. Particularly in the analysis of liberal political theorists, Walzer's commitment to interpreting the shared understandings of the communities of which he is a part is seen as sitting uncomfortably with his social democracy. The dissertation argues that when Walzer's conception of equality is taken seriously, the path of interpretation is closely allied to it. If we wish to instantiate equality in political practice, rather than refining the philosophical concept ever more closely, we have no choice but to take seriously the interests, desires, and passions of citizens and of citizen-activists. That is why his conception of equality, which is more sociologically robust than the dominant liberal alternative, has more chance of being appropriated by radical movements.

In the dissertation, consideration is also given to Walzer's just war theory, to the impact of his Judaism on his thought, and to the relationship between these things and his continued adherence to a version of democratic socialism.

Contents

CHAPTER	PAGE NUMBER
Introduction	1
1. The Early Writings of Michael Walzer (1955-1970)	15
2. The 1970s	32
3. Arrival At the Institute (1980-1985)	77
4. The Essayist as Public Intellectual (1986-1992)	112
5. Cultural Encounters and Moral Judgments (1993-2000)	156
6. Revisions and Summations (2001-2011)	176
Conclusion	197
References and Notes	205
Bibliography	269

Introduction: The Point of Studying the Political Thought of Michael Walzer (and the point of doing so historically)

I

A just society is one in which goods are distributed in accordance with reasons intrinsic to the meaning of the good in question and in which pre-eminence in one sphere of social life does not bring advantages outside that sphere.¹ A just war is one fought in defense of national sovereignty and in which non-combatant immunity is respected and the laws of war obeyed in all situations save that of the ‘supreme emergency,’ when national survival is at stake.² The appropriate task of the political theorist is to act as a social critic who interprets the shared understandings of particular communities rather than claiming to discover or invent moral principles de novo.³ These are among the arguments that have made Michael Walzer one of the most prominent of contemporary political and international relations theorists. He has made contributions to the debates about the ethics of war, distributive justice, civil society, multiculturalism, the Jewish political tradition, radical politics in contexts as disparate as late twentieth century America, seventeenth century England, and Biblical Israel, global governance, and more.

Walzer is also one of the USA’s foremost public intellectuals. In recognition of this, *Foreign Policy* and *Prospect* magazines voted him the 68th most prominent public intellectual in the world in 2005 and the 61st most prominent in 2008.⁴ Walzer’s fame in this regard stems from his editorship of *Dissent*, a New York magazine of left intellectuals for which Walzer has worked in some capacity since 1955, when he was 20 years old, his frequent contributions to the *New Republic*, for which he is a contributing editor, and his stance on such public debates as those surrounding the American wars with Iraq in 1991 and 2003 and the Middle Eastern conflict.

The literature is crying out for a study of Walzer’s political thought that focuses on the various aspects of his career: one that seeks to provide an interpretation of the main body of his work and to situate that work within the context of the American left as Walzer has been part of it. My thesis is just such a study and is the first book-length study of Walzer’s work as a whole that relates his political theory to his political commentary and status as a public intellectual and to his involvement with a section of the American left. There are many extant studies of Walzer that provide useful examinations of the philosophical status of broad swathes of his work: notably, Brian Orend provides an important analysis of Walzer’s just war theory and relates it to the substantive theory of justice advanced in *Spheres of Justice*, and Georgia Warnke has undertaken a sustained critique of Walzer’s interpretivist methodology.⁵ David Miller, one of Walzer’s most regular interlocutors, has published both a collection of essays on *Spheres* and a collection of Walzer’s essays, to each of which he adds an introduction interpreting Walzer’s arguments and career development.⁶ The importance of my thesis is that it is more comprehensive and more historical than previous studies of Walzer’s work.

My thesis thus speaks to several audiences. First, it engages with those interested in the status of public intellectuals in the USA over the second half of the twentieth century and with the argument about whether the role has gone into decline owing to professionalization and institutionalization.⁷ I have said that Walzer is a public intellectual; however, he has been a university professor throughout his career, something that may be odds with that account. In this

thesis, I grapple with the question of Walzer's political commentary and ask what it means to be a public intellectual and an academic simultaneously.

Secondly, it concerns the status of left-wing political activism in the United States over the same time period and engages with theorists of American democracy. In particular, I highlight Walzer as having worked on projects and developed arguments that were partly inspired by dilemmas common to the American left. In this regard, of particular importance is the way in which Walzer responded to the rise and decline of the New Left in the 1960s and 70s and to the electoral success of neoliberalism and Reaganomics from the late 1970s onwards. Thus, my account of Walzer recovers the political nature of his thought, which is lost in more analytical accounts. I consider carefully Walzer's involvement with the group known as the 'New York Intellectuals' (NYIs) and in particular with the founders of *Dissent*, Irving Howe and Lewis Coser. I take Walzer's work to emerge in large part a prolonged, but perpetually tense, engagement with the American tradition of 'radical democracy',⁸ in his attempt to transform American politics in an egalitarian direction while remaining loyal to the fundamental tenets of American liberalism.⁹

Thirdly, the thesis engages with an approach to intellectual history that sees our thought as emerging out of various traditions, where a tradition means an ongoing argument, and developments in our thought as emerging out of dilemmas, in other words with forms of historicism. I argue that the historicist methodology helps us to interpret Walzer's work more clearly than does the method of analysis favored by many political theorists because it situates it in context. This point demonstrates the relationship between the arguments, for I take Walzer to face dilemmas common to the American left in the last 50 years. The central dilemma is how to transcend both liberalism and Marxism (and other varieties of revolutionary socialism) while drawing on both traditions.¹⁰

Finally, but most importantly, my thesis is of interest to normative political theorists. I argue that the meaning of Walzer's work has been lost to them because of their failure to adopt a historicist or contextualized methodology in interpreting his work. There are many ways in which this is so, but the principal one is as follows: many scholars working in the tradition of analytic philosophy have been puzzled by how Walzer's "communitarianism", which seems to them inherently conservative, can be reconciled with his commitment to egalitarian political principles. I argue that the label of communitarian, which has frequently been applied to Walzer in virtue of his interpretive methodology, is misleading. There are, as Walzer acknowledges, communitarian aspects of his thought, most notably the 'supreme emergency' argument. However, Walzer is first and foremost a social democrat. His insistence that political theorists should interpret our shared values and that justice requires being faithful to the shared understandings of particular communities arises out of his involvement with American radical democracy and its engagement with debates in American public life. As a social democrat, Walzer is more concerned with the lived experience of equality than the philosophical analysis of it: he acknowledges that liberal theories of justice are egalitarian, but deems them insufficiently available for egalitarian appropriation on the part of political activists, because they ignore real people's actual concerns and are insufficiently sophisticated in their sociological, historical, and anthropological understanding.

In other words, the central point of Walzer's political theory is that liberals have misunderstood the nature of equality, as have non-democratic socialists. One of the central features of Walzer's thought – as of that of Irving Howe before him¹¹ – is his attempt to find space for a broad church egalitarian movement that has space for democratic, socialist, liberal,

and communitarian values. For Walzer, egalitarian politics must be more inclusive than many radical movements have been: if we want to treat people as equals, we must also provide scope for them to express their differences in institutional and communal form. Walzer's inclusiveness and his concern with actual people's beliefs explains how his 'communitarian' methodology ties in with his egalitarianism and is, in fact, inseparable from it. Both of the two – and not just the commitment to equality – are fundamental aspects of social democracy, as Walzer understands it. It is this that is lost in analytic accounts of his thought and recoverable only through a historical study.

This introduction seeks to explain briefly how Walzer's political thought speaks to all of these target audiences. So that those unfamiliar with Walzer's work have some context, I start with an overview of his career. I then outline the intellectual approach of the thesis and its historicist methodology. I then address the debate about the role of public intellectuals in American life and relate it to the New York Intellectuals, that group of public intellectuals of most direct relevance to the thesis. This leads us on to the traditions of thought that I take to have influenced Walzer over the course of his career. I outline the dilemmas that the thesis focuses on, emphasizing the way in which a study of Walzer speaks to American democratic theorists and to those interested in the radical democratic tradition. Having situated the thesis in context, I conclude the introduction with a summary of the main interpretive arguments of the thesis and an outline of its structure.

II¹²

Michael Walzer was born on 3 March 1935 and raised in the Bronx. Both his parents were first-generation Jewish immigrants: his father's family came from Austrian Galicia and his mother's, the Litvaks, from Belarus. His father worked in the fur trade and his mother was the first Jewish secretary in John Foster Dulles's law firm. Although, as was fairly common in their milieu, she continued to work after her marriage, she stopped working after Michael, their eldest child, was born. The family lived on the Grand Concourse in the Bronx, having moved there from the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Michael attended a left-wing nursery school that he has no recollection of. His parents read PM, a daily New York newspaper for which Max Werner and I. F. Stone wrote columns, and which supported the Popular Front, but was not Communist. When Michael's father's fur trade went bankrupt as the American economy slid back into Depression in 1937-8, he went to work in a factory that focused on war production and continued to work there until 1944. At that point, the family relocated to Johnstown, Pennsylvania, where Michael's father had been offered a job as a manager in a jeweler's store. By then, Michael's sister Judith – now the Ruppel Bascom and Ruth Bleier Professor of History of Medicine, History of Science, and Women's Studies at the University of Madison-Wisconsin – had been born. Michael continued to live in Johnstown until he went to Brandeis University as an undergraduate in 1953. Johnstown was dominated by Bethlehem Steel, which employed 20,000 workers in the town and paid them in coupons. Now, Bethlehem Steel is gone and Johnstown is part of the rust belt.

Walzer found Brandeis an exciting place to study. Its President, Abe Sacker, recruited radical faculty who, during the era of McCarthyism, could not get jobs elsewhere, most notably Herbert Marcuse. Partly as a result of this employment policy, the 60s began early at Brandeis. Simultaneously, the 30s were re-enacted in on-campus disputes between Stalinists and Trotskyites. The primary influences on Walzer among the Brandeis faculty were Lewis Coser,

who was Walzer's first teacher of Marx, and Irving Howe. Walzer first heard Howe lecture in 1953 and found him inspirational: on his next trip to visit his parents, he told them that he wanted to become an intellectual. Not long after, Walzer was assisting Howe and Coser on their new magazine, *Dissent*, which was founded in 1954, and on their co-written monograph, *The American Communist Party: A Critical History*, for the research on which Walzer received a grant from Brandeis.¹³ As we shall see, *The American Communist Party* is a significant work in understanding the ways in which Howe and Coser influenced Walzer, because it provides an exemplary account of their anti-Stalinist socialism.

At Brandeis, the intellectual history Frank Manuel also influenced Walzer, who took a course with Manuel in each of his four years. Manuel's research focused on the Enlightenment and Walzer remembers fondly Manuel's class on that subject, as well as his class on Western civilization. Walzer never took a class with Marcuse, and he reacted sharply against some of Marcuse's epigones, but he did read all Marcuse's books and acknowledges Marcuse to have been of some influence in shaping Walzer's views. Many years later, Walzer wrote a critique of Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* in *The Company of Critics*.¹⁴

When he graduated from Brandeis, Walzer went to England on a Fulbright Fellowship and spent the academic year 1956-7 at the University of Cambridge. In Cambridge, and under the supervision of Geoffrey Elton, Walzer began his research on 16th and 17th century English history, which was to turn into his PhD thesis and then into his first book, *The Revolution of the Saints*.¹⁵ Although Elton's interests were different to those of Walzer, he encouraged Michael "sweetly" and they read Puritan writers together. Walzer describes Elton as a "model Empire Tory" and as being what he thought a real Englishman would be like. While in England, Walzer continued to be involved in radical movements, going to some of the meetings of the group that founded *Universities and Left Review*, which was to become the *New Left Review*. Walzer also made the acquaintance of the well-known Marxist Ralph Miliband – whose son was recently elected as the leader of the Labour Party – and, at Miliband's home in London, of Isaac Deutscher.

In 1957, Walzer returned to the USA and began a PhD at Harvard University under the supervision of Samuel Beer, who he describes as being "wonderfully supportive" despite not knowing much about Walzer's topic. Beer was influential on Walzer in two ways: first, he gave him his first teaching experience; secondly, he gave him the idea of studying history guided by theory and working back and forth between the two. In Walzer's view, his method of using history to illuminate theory and testing theory with historical cases – so much in evidence in major works such as *Just and Unjust Wars* and *Spheres of Justice* – stems from Beer. Other influential figures on Walzer at Harvard include Louis Hartz and Barrington Moore. Carl Friedrich was Walzer's lead professor when he taught a political theory course to undergraduates, but according to Walzer the two did not have a good personal affinity. He did, however, become close friends with Friedrich's student Judith Shklar, who was originally Walzer's section leader, as she taught a graduate section, and who was later to dedicate a book to him. At Harvard, Walzer organized a New Left Club consisting of graduate students such as Martin Kilson, Stephan Thernstrom, and Gordon Feldman. The club's primary achievement was to publish a statement in the *New York Times* at the time of the Bay of Pigs crisis.

Walzer graduated from Harvard in 1961, in the same year as the birth of his first daughter, and took up a teaching position at Princeton University, before rejoining Harvard in 1966, the year in which his second daughter was born. Walzer spent another year in the UK in 1964, forming a close association with the circle surrounding the magazine *Views*, which had

been formed by defectors from the *New Left Review*, including Stuart Hall, Michael Rustin, Anthony Arblaster, Clive Barker, Henry Collins, Robin Murray, Ken Trodd, Oliver Williams, and Bernard Crick. Walzer's appointment at Princeton had been for three years with one year free, which gave him the opportunity to live in London for a year. While there, his wife, Judith Borodovko Walzer, whom Walzer had met as an undergraduate, continued to work on her PhD dissertation on George Gissing and studied with F. R. Leavis, whom she had been directed to by Irving Howe. Judith Walzer was later to become the Provost of the New School for Social Research in New York.

Walzer's first spell at Princeton was noteworthy because it was while there that he was first drawn to a community of philosophers, and made the friendship of such figures as Robert Nozick and Thomas Nagel. He was strongly influenced by Stuart Hampshire. At this time, his interests were moving away from the history of ideas and he wished to start writing political theory. This was made difficult, says Walzer, by the fact that, at the time, Politics Departments focused entirely on the history of political theory in their teaching. Walzer was therefore very pleased that Hampshire listened to an early lecture of his on political theory and gave him helpful feedback.¹⁶ In the mid-1960s, Walzer joined the Society for Ethical and Legal Philosophy, membership of which provided him with his "philosophical education",¹⁷ as well as enormous mental stimulation. The Society met monthly for discussions. Its members included John Rawls, Ronald Dworkin, Judith Jarvis Thomson – one of Walzer's closest interlocutors, who is thanked individually in the acknowledgements to both *Just and Unjust Wars* and *Spheres of Justice* – Ronald Dworkin, Tim Scanlon, Charles Fried, and Marshall Cohen, as well as Walzer, Nozick, Nagel, and others. The Society was a congenial philosophy grouping for Walzer, because it was influential in philosophy's reengagement with public affairs, and he has never been interested in any other form of philosophy. Indeed, the journal *Philosophy and Public Affairs* was set up by members of the Society in 1971.

By then, Walzer was back at Harvard and had published two more books: *Obligations and Political Action*.¹⁸ He spent the academic year 1971-2 writing an essay that provided a Girondist defense of the trial of Louis XIV, which was to become *Regicide and Revolution*,¹⁹ and working on the early chapters of *Just and Unjust Wars*. It became extremely important to Walzer to write a book on war because of the American involvement in Vietnam, the Israeli wars of 1967 and 1973, and because he had grown up as a Jewish boy during World War II. Thus he spent much of the 1970s working on the book while at Harvard. In 1975, Martin Kessler of Basic Books heard Walzer give a lecture on the justification of fighting World War II²⁰ and encouraged him to write the book, which Basic Books eventually published. A prolific writer, Walzer was also able to contribute an increasing number of pieces to *Dissent*, which he was now on the editorial staff of. Those pieces form the backbone of *Radical Principles*, published in 1980, and which in many ways forms the public intellectual version of the argument put forward in academic idiom in *Spheres of Justice* in 1983.²¹ Also in the 1970s, Walzer began to visit Israel regularly. He had first been there in the summer of 1957, but he could not return for many years because he and Judith were finishing their PhDs and raising children. Now, they go at least once every year for between two weeks and a month, normally in June. Walzer spent two semesters there, in 1983 and 1987, and is a member of the Board of Governors of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Walzer's final major activity of the 1970s was teaching: at Harvard he taught classes on 17th century literature, on Shakespeare's account of different political systems, on socialist thought, on nationalism, on means and ends, on obligations, and on just war theory.

In 1980, Walzer left Harvard to take up a research position at the Institute for Advanced Study, in Princeton, where he has been ever since. At the Institute, Walzer was greatly influenced by the anthropologist Clifford Geertz, and also learned from the economist Albert Hirschman. The greater freedom of his position at the Institute, which has no students, has enabled Walzer to produce a staggering quantity of published material. *Spheres* was his first book publication at the Institute, followed two years later by *Exodus and Revolution*,²² one of Walzer's favorites among his books, because the Jewish exodus from Egypt has fascinated him ever since his bar mitzvah portion was on the golden calf and the purge of the idol worshippers. Spurred on by Ronald Dworkin's critical review of *Spheres*, Walzer spent much of the second half of the 1980s developing the theoretical justification of his interpretivist methodology so as to show that interpretation was compatible with egalitarianism and radical critique. The result was *Interpretation and Social Criticism* (1987), *The Company of Critics* (1988), and *Thick and Thin* (1994),²³ which developed the argument by explaining how the interpretivist method that dominates Walzer's writings on theories of justice is compatible with the commitment to universal human rights found in Walzer's just war theory.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the rising tide of immigration to the USA in the 1990s prompted Walzer to turn his attention in the 1990s to such matters as multiculturalism, the accommodation of difference, the role of civil society in political life and its relationship with the state, and the place of reason, passion, deliberation, and commitment in political debate. With the exception of Walzer's continued engagement with earlier themes such as distributive justice and the ethics of war found in such works as *Pluralism, Justice, and Equality* (1995) and *Arguing About War* (2004), all of Walzer's books published in the last 20 years have focused on such themes as multiculturalism. They include *What It Means to be an American* (1992),²⁴ *On Toleration* (1997),²⁵ *Politics and Passion* (2005),²⁶ and *Thinking Politically* (2007). Walzer also edited the collection *Toward a Global Civil Society* (1995).²⁷ Starting in 1992, collections of Walzer's essays have been published in other languages, including German, Swedish, French, Spanish, and Italian, and many of his books have been translated. He has also spent much of the last two decades working collaboratively on a project entitled *The Jewish Political Tradition*, of which two volumes have so far been published.²⁸ According to Walzer, the third volume is likely to be published in 2011. Walzer also edited *Law, Politics, and Morality in Judaism* (2006),²⁹ and his most recently published book was the edited collection on the withdrawal of US armed forces from Iraq, *Getting Out* (2009).³⁰ During these decades, Walzer has also continued to publish extensively in academic journals and in such forums for public intellectuals as *Dissent*, of which he became the editor in 1993 on the death of Irving Howe.

I supplement that brief biographical account of Walzer at various points in the chapters that follow this introduction. Its main significance for our current purposes will become clear when we discuss the intellectual approach of the thesis, for already we have mentioned the various traditions of thought that have impacted upon Walzer during his career. For readers not familiar with Walzer's work, or only familiar with certain aspects of it, the account just provided states the publication date and topic of every one of the books that Walzer has written or edited in English.

III

In this section, I explain the intellectual approach of my thesis. In studying Michael Walzer, I adopt an historical approach and focus on how various traditions of thought have influenced him over the course of his career.

Studying Walzer's thought historically is, I argue, beneficial because it helps to understand his thought more clearly. I argue that many of his key arguments emerge from his attempt to reconcile the various traditions or, put differently, to develop a coherent worldview out of disparate and often incompatible methodological techniques, philosophical practices, and political commitments. Indeed, those very distinctions between methodology, philosophy, and politics, which are drawn rather starkly by some analytic philosophers in the liberal tradition inspired by John Rawls, are blurred in, or disputed by, the other traditions of thought with which Walzer was engaged. I take Walzer to have been strongly influenced by various traditions early in his career and to have developed research programs that were based partly on questions prominent within the traditions or emerging from the encounter between them. By now, although he is still influenced by the traditions, his particular theoretical insights have to some extent transformed each tradition into a unique position of his own.

Central to this historicist methodology are the notions of tradition and dilemma and the following questions: what is a tradition? How do traditions influence people and what scope for agency do they leave? How do people reconcile conflicting traditions? Finally, what is a dilemma and how do thinkers confront and overcome them? It is important to start by noting that, despite the usage to which conservative political theorists have put the notion of tradition, my appeal to it does not downplay the role of human reason in political theory. Rather, the point is to insist upon the importance of social and historical context in forming the background to our exercise of reason and to insist that, "we cannot adequately identify either our own commitments or those of others in the argumentative conflicts of the present except by situating them within those histories which made them what they have now become."³¹ Leave out consideration of the tradition, and you are likely to misinterpret the specific argument being put forward by the author influenced by that tradition.

As I conceive it, a tradition is:

[A]n argument extended through time in which certain fundamental agreements are defined and redefined in terms of two kinds of conflict: those with critics and enemies external to the tradition who reject all or at least key parts of those fundamental agreements, and those internal, interpretative debates through which the meaning and rationale of the fundamental agreements come to be expressed and by whose progress a tradition is constituted.³²

Defining a tradition as an ongoing, socially embodied argument enables us to avoid treating traditions as "hypostatized entities."³³ We can identify traditions only by studying the beliefs of those people who are influenced by the tradition. There is no way to define a tradition such that alternative accounts of that tradition are not possible: if there were, a tradition would lose its temporal extension. By locating oneself in a tradition, a person makes "a historical argument with which others might disagree."³⁴ Thus, for example, Marx himself could not have given a definitive account of the nature of Marxism with which other members of the tradition could not have quibbled. This inability to define a tradition means both that members of a tradition can and do disagree with each other vigorously and that historians can locate figures in many different traditions. As we shall see, the fact that both Walzer and Irving Howe had serious objections to

many of the developments in the New Left, and especially in the student movement, after about 1965 does not preclude us from concluding that both the *Dissent* circle and the members of Students for a Democratic Society belong to the American radical democratic tradition.³⁵ Furthermore, the fact that traditions are ongoing arguments that cannot be given an uncontested definition means that traditions influence, rather than determining, the beliefs of their members.

The notion of a tradition is of great explanatory power in understanding how people reach their beliefs, but it cannot explain how we develop our inherited beliefs. Although what I have said so far leaves scope for authors to develop their theories, it offers no guidelines on how we should interpret the ways in which they do that. Understanding the ways in which someone's position develops over time requires two things: first, the notion of a dilemma; secondly, an account of how people reconcile conflicting traditions. Dilemmas can be defined as "authoritative understandings that put into question [our] existing webs of belief. Dilemmas prompt changes of belief because they consist of new beliefs and any new belief necessarily poses a question of the agent's web of beliefs."³⁶ In other words, a dilemma is any challenge to an author's understanding of the world and can arise from new experiences, encounters with new theories and traditions, or further reflection upon our existing beliefs. When encountered with a dilemma, an author cannot but adapt his or her beliefs, because of the desire to develop a consistent worldview or web of beliefs.

One of the most important causes of a dilemma is the conflict between different traditions. When this happens, there are frequently no neutral ways of characterizing the subject of the disagreement, because the rival traditions provide different accounts of what it is they are interpreting. As Thomas Kuhn famously pointed out, 17th and 18th century scientists would have been staggered to be told that phlogiston does not exist.³⁷ If, as it seems, the claims made by rival traditions are not only incompatible but also in important ways incommensurable, how can we possibly go about reconciling their claims?

In this thesis, I follow the famous account offered by Alasdair MacIntyre as to how traditions can be reconciled. According to MacIntyre, progress is made when the protagonists of one tradition recognize that their tradition cannot develop its enquiries beyond a certain point because of "insoluble antinomies".³⁸ The members come to realize that an alternative tradition may have the resources both to characterize and to explain its own failings in ways inaccessible to those who stay within the confines of the original tradition. Thus, the first tradition is flawed *on its own terms* and the problem of incommensurability dissolves. MacIntyre concludes that the claims to truth of rival traditions depend on the "explanatory power" of the histories that each tradition is able to tell.³⁹ In other words, traditions justify themselves via the stories that they are able to tell, or via narration.

My thesis makes use of the notions of tradition, dilemma, and reconciliation between traditions and advances the claim that these are of central importance to intellectual historians, generally, and to scholars of Michael Walzer in particular. As the reader will see, the study of Walzer exemplifies the way in which absent an account of the various traditions of thought that form the context of an author's thought, the meaning of that thought is searched for in vain. One of my central arguments is that analytic philosophers who have attempted to interpret Walzer have invariably misinterpreted him by failing to take seriously his claim to be a social democrat and have thus misdescribed him as a communitarian. If this claim is correct, my thesis is of great importance to contemporary intellectual history, in that it speaks to the debate between historicists and those who would see ideas as having a timeless essence or recurring character. Those who are skeptical about my general claim about the importance of an historical approach

to the study of political theorists may find it worthy of note that Walzer personally adopts an approach not dissimilar to the one that I have just outlined and that he claims to have learned a great deal from MacIntyre's account of encounters between traditions.

The second chapter of the thesis is devoted to a detailed account of the traditions that I see as central to the study of Walzer's thought, each of which was mentioned in the biographical sketch of Walzer above. The central traditions are, in order of importance: American radical democracy, and in particular the *Dissent* circle; analytic philosophy, as Walzer encountered it through his association with the Society for Ethical and Legal Philosophy; and the historical approach to the study of politics that Walzer inherited from Beer and his other graduate school advisers at Harvard, which emphasized drawing theoretical insights from the study of history.

IV

A second research topic to which my thesis is of interest is that into the status of public intellectuals in the USA, and the Western world in general, in the second half of the 20th century. Following Russell Jacoby, a slew of authors have argued that the contemporary era has witnessed the demise of the public intellectual – or even, in Frank Furedi's provocative wording, of the intellectual per se⁴⁰ – and his or her replacement by the scholar, the pundit, or, more generally, the specialist. According to this view, the increasing professionalization of academia has created an environment in which there is little scope for young intellectuals to develop the sort of broad voice that characterized the public intellectual in days of yore. Furthermore, there may no longer be the broadly educated audience that was the target of the public intellectual. Rather, both author and audience alike are trapped in ever smaller scholarly communities that have little to say to each other and do not share a common frame of reference or concern. In a world in which academics write principally for each other, and in an idiom that is often inaccessible not only to non-academics but also to academics in different departments – and possibly even to academics in different subfields of the same discipline – there is no space for generalists who speak to an educated public on matters of wide concern. Such an outlook is increasingly prominent amongst social scientists, in general, and political scientists in particular. Indeed, the October 2010 issue of *Political Science and Politics* includes a lengthy symposium on public intellectuals⁴¹ that begins with an article by Amitai Etzioni in which he states from the outset that for a political scientist to count as a public intellectual, he or she must have “something to say that will serve the president, the American people, or even the world.”⁴² Etzioni argues that, while American political scientists hold that they have something of that ilk to say, how they might get such a voice is an important question. (It is also worthy of note, however, that Etzioni is more optimistic about the short-term future of public intellectual activity amongst political scientists than he was in a 2006 book that he edited entitled, *Public Intellectuals: An Endangered Species?*)⁴³

This view rests on the premises that, until the era following the Second World War, young intellectuals tended to be unaffiliated, broadly educated, politically passionate, and in possession of a set of concerns that were widely shared among the reading public. Thus, there was scope for a public intellectual, who wrote about the concerns that were common to the reading public and who did so using an idiom that they were familiar and comfortable with. In recent decades, however, most intellectuals have gravitated towards academia because of the massive expansion of the higher education sector. This has meant that intellectuals have tended

to have a vastly more comfortable life than did their predecessors, but it has also led to a certain institutionalization. Young intellectuals now spend much of their 20s and 30s being rigorously trained in a variety of scholarly techniques that are widely shared by neither their audiences nor even their interlocutors. It is often an open question whether political theorists can communicate effectively with other members of political science departments, let alone how either group can speak to anthropologists, biologists, journalists, or lawyers. In this environment, public intellectuals simply cannot operate in the manner in which they did in the past, and we are therefore witnessing a dearth of such figures as the category itself goes into seemingly inexorable “decline”.

As I said, this is a widely shared view in the literature on the public intellectual and it clearly points to important and noteworthy developments in the American economy and academy over the last 70 or 80 years. As we will see in my thesis, Michael Walzer has been a university professor for his entire working life, whereas many of those who influenced him in previous generations struggled to find employment as professors, both because of academic anti-Semitism and because there simply were not as many jobs available in American universities prior to the mid-1950s. As a result, such figures tended to write for magazines such as *Partisan Review*, *Commentary*, the *New Republic*, and, of course, *Dissent*.

However, we should be wary of accepting such a view uncritically, and this for several reasons. First, the term ‘public intellectual’ is a contentious one and the definition suggested above could easily be seen as an historical product of a particular set of circumstances rather than a timeless account of an unchanging social role. Secondly, it is surely significant that the concept of the ‘public intellectual’ is of recent vintage. Indeed, it only emerged when the processes that were supposedly causing the category to fall into abeyance were well underway. In the ‘heyday’ of the public intellectual during the first half of the 20th century, nobody spoke of public intellectuals. Thirdly, for all the truth in the account of the harm done to interdisciplinary intellectual activity by academic specialization, it remains the case that many social scientists and political theorists have continued to devote much of their professional activity to writing for an educated but non-academic public on issues of general concern. As a lifelong contributor to, and long-term editor of, *Dissent* Michael Walzer is foremost among such figures. Ever since the mid-1950s, Walzer has published for both public intellectual magazines and academic journals, thus demonstrating that it is possible to do both and blurring the lines between these distinctions. Furthermore, he has also spent much of his time engaged in political activism, which in many categorizations of our intellectual landscape would be a third, separate sphere of activity distinct both from academia and from the world of the public intellectual.

In studying the historical development of Michael Walzer’s thought since the mid-1950s, my thesis therefore engages directly with the debate about the nature and role of the public intellectual. It speaks to the question posed by Etzioni in *Political Science and Politics* about how a political scientist can be a public intellectual in today’s world. The study of Walzer’s career reveals that there are indeed important differences between the circumstances that have faced him and those that faced predecessors such as Irving Howe and Lewis Coser,⁴⁴ but that there are also important continuities in American intellectual life. Like earlier American intellectuals, Walzer has devoted an enormous amount of energy to publishing for a non-academic audience in various forums, including *Dissent*, the *New Republic*, the *New York Review of Books*, and others. Recently, many of his lectures or talks have been made available online and are downloaded by people with no connection to academia.⁴⁵ However, it is undeniably the case that Walzer has made his bread as a professor and that it is as such that he believes his foremost

contributions to have developed. Thus, Walzer has had to learn to write in different styles when writing for different audiences. An enlightening story that he told me when we met was that, while he never decides until an article has been completed whether it should be submitted to an academic or to a public-intellectual journal, he does subsequently both add more footnotes and muddy the prose if he decides, on completion, that the article is most suited to an academic journal.

Walzer's career, and my study of it, does not answer any questions about what it is to be a public intellectual definitively, if indeed definitive answers to such questions are possible. However, it does raise interesting questions about the continuities and the changes in American intellectual life between the start of Walzer's career and now and speaks to the debate about the role of the public intellectual, both in Walzer's own case and in that of those men and women who preceded and influenced him in the formative stages of his career.

V

The particular site of public intellectual activity with which Michael Walzer has been most indebted to is that of a section of the American left that has its roots in the world of the so-called New York Intellectuals in the 1930s. My thesis fits into a broader research agenda of similar studies of the American left over the second half of the twentieth century because central to my argument is that understanding Walzer requires knowledge of developments in left-wing political activism since the 1930s, and in particular of the radical democratic tradition. Therefore, much of the next chapter of my thesis – on contexts and traditions – centers on a detailed examination of the relationship between the New York Intellectuals, and especially the *Dissent* circle, and the radical democratic tradition.

The banner point is that much of Walzer's work is an attempt to respond to dilemmas that were common to the American left. My argument is that the rise and decline of the New Left and activist movements in the 1960s and 1970s, and the subsequent electoral success of the New Right starting in 1980 and continuing almost unabated to the present day, has embroiled left-wing political theorists, commentators and activists in a series of dilemmas to which Walzer's responses are illuminating to all interested in those dilemmas. The interest of Walzer's political theory is that it is at once characteristic of a near left activist cum theorist working on such issues as the Vietnam War, the race relations movement, the success of Reaganomics, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the foreign policy of the Bush Administrations, and unique to himself. Walzer's political theory is unique both because of his skills as a theorist and because of the ways in which he has grappled with traditions of thought not usually engaged with by those in the radical democratic tradition, and especially the tradition of analytic philosophy.

The central dilemma with which this section of the American left has been engaged ever since the 1930s is, I argue, how to identify and defend a socialism that is anti-Stalinist, and later on anti-Marxist, and is simultaneously non-liberal without being illiberal. As we shall see in the next chapter, that attempt is central to the work of Irving Howe and Lewis Coser, two of the greatest influences on Michael Walzer.⁴⁶ Carving out a niche for a democratic socialism has been the *Dissent* circle's central task since the magazine was established in 1953. Therefore any study of one of *Dissent*'s major contributors speaks to anyone interested in social democracy in the United States and to democratic theorists. For, in attempting to defend a democratic socialism, such theorists must engage with questions of what is desirable and essential to the American way of life and what is an unfortunate byproduct of untrammelled capitalism that could be sloughed

off in a revitalized American social democracy. Key to the self-understanding of many American social democrats is that they dissent from American democracy as it exists, while remaining loyal to the core values that underlie it.

It is characteristic of responses to social democratic theory that critics accuse it of nebulousness and argue that it has failed to develop a position that is critical, non-liberal, and socialist. Frequently, revolutionary socialists will accuse social democrats of not really differing from the liberalism that it claims to attack, and liberals will concur that social democracy is, really, no different from liberalism. Any social democratic political theorist will be familiar with this critique of his or her work. As we shall see, this is a criticism that has been made of *Dissent* throughout its existence⁴⁷ and is prominent in contemporary critiques of Michael Walzer's work. Walzer's responses to such views, most notably his increasing embracing of the idea that social democracy can indeed incorporate the best elements of liberalism within it, are worthy of note. I argue that one of the central commitments of Walzer's thought, as of Irving Howe before him and of *Dissent* in general, is to a broad church radical movement that can break free of ideological 'purity' and embrace the best elements of liberalism, socialism, communitarianism, and even conservatism while remaining in tune with its fundamental commitment to democratic norms.⁴⁸

In recent years, Walzer's work has also engaged with the dilemma of how to respect difference without abandoning a commitment to equality. This has become increasingly important after the demise of the Soviet Union, which led to fruitful research into the role of civil society in the development of a democratic polity, and because of the wave of immigration to the United States that has raised awareness of the country's multicultural makeup. Thus, my thesis also speaks to difference theorists and to contemporary debates about cultural accommodation. Indeed, it is in responding to this dilemma that Walzer and the *Dissent* circle's unique contribution to political theory emerges. From their perspective, the old Marxist left, along with liberal egalitarians and some elements of the New Left, fail to recognize the importance of people's cultural attachments and hence focus too much attention on equality at the expense of difference.

For this reason, Walzer has developed a theory of "meat-and-potatoes multiculturalism", discussed in chapter 5 of the thesis, which is an attempt to recognize the importance of both equality and difference. Walzer advocates giving cultural groups the material goods necessary to foster their self-respect on the grounds that either one without the other is insufficient.⁴⁹ Indeed, the theory of complex equality developed in *Spheres of Justice* can also be seen as an attempt to reconcile difference and equality, albeit with pluralism here substituting for difference. Later on in the thesis, I argue that Walzer's argument in favor of pluralism is the intellectual precursor to his discussion of what he calls the politics of difference. It can seem formidably difficult to develop a theory that treats people as equal and also respects their differences. After all, "difference" and "equality" are in some ways antonyms. How can people be different if they are equal? How can they be equal if they are different? Walzer's response to this works in large part by shifting the notion of difference to that of plurality. We treat people as equals when we provide for a rough equality of social goods by insisting on a strict separation between different spheres of human activity and when we recognize each different sphere and each cultural group as having a different worth of its own.

To conclude, Walzer's engagement with the American left and with the dilemmas posed to it by the rise of the New Right and by cultural difference makes this thesis of interest to all those working on American democratic theory and left-wing political activism.

VI

The thesis is ordered chronologically, so as to enable me to situate each of Walzer's entries into the debates in which he participated.

Chapter 1 covers the early years of Walzer's career and ends in about 1970. I take Walzer to be finding his way towards a worldview in this period and the influence of the three traditions I have discussed in this introduction to be particularly strong. *Political Action* is Walzer's take on movement politics and on the radical democratic tradition, while *The Revolution of the Saints* is a classic study in historicized idealism and *Obligations* reflects Walzer's first encounter with philosophical methods, but also draws on his activist experience.

Chapter 2 deals with Walzer's work in the 1970s, the decade in which he came of his own as a political theorist. Unsurprisingly, *Just and Unjust Wars* is my primary concern, and *Radical Principles* also merits considerable attention. Thus the political experiences of the anti-Vietnam movement and of the decline of the New Left are important topics for concern. This chapter also sees Walzer's first attempt to reconcile his ethics of war, or international political theory, with his account of American politics, something that would come to the fore in later chapters.

In chapter 3, I provide an interpretation of Walzer's work in the first half of the 1980s, the period in which the complex equality research program came to the fore with the publication of *Spheres of Justice* and a bunch of related articles such as "Philosophy and Democracy" and "Liberalism and the Art of Separation".⁵⁰ In this chapter, I begin to develop the thesis's main interpretive argument as to why Walzer's political thought can be understood only in context. Many scholars working in the tradition of analytic philosophy have been puzzled by how Walzer's "communitarianism", which seems to them inherently conservative, can be reconciled with his commitment to egalitarian political principles.⁵¹ I argue that the label of communitarian, which has frequently been applied to Walzer in virtue of his interpretive methodology, is misleading, although there are, as Walzer acknowledges, communitarian aspects of his thought, most notably the 'supreme emergency' argument.⁵² Walzer's insistence that political theorists should interpret our shared values and that justice requires being faithful to the shared understandings of particular communities arises out of his involvement with American radical democracy and its engagement with debates in American public life. As a social democrat, Walzer is more concerned with the lived experience of equality than the philosophical analysis of it: he acknowledges that liberal theories of justice are egalitarian, but deems them insufficiently available for egalitarian appropriation on the part of political activists, precisely because they ignore real people's actual concerns and are insufficiently sophisticated in their sociological, historical, and anthropological understanding.⁵³

This argument is developed further in chapter 4, which covers Walzer's thought in the second half of the 1980s and into the early 1990s, concentrating on such works as *Interpretation and Social Criticism* and *The Company of Critics*. I follow Walzer as taking the latter book to be a "political" statement of the "philosophical" theory developed in the first one,⁵⁴ although the distinction between politics and philosophy must be understood to be problematic. Furthermore, it is worthy of note that Walzer is highly critical of such case studies as Herbert Marcuse and Michel Foucault on the grounds that they were insufficiently committed to the societies they took to be criticizing, thus calling into question his central contention that social criticism has been one of the key modes in twentieth-century social philosophy. Throughout the 1980s, I take

Walzer to have been centrally concerned to provide a social democratic counterpart to the liberalism dominant in academic political theory and its counterpart in the neoliberalism of the Reagan Administration. Of course, Walzer does not deny that Rawlsian liberalism is significantly more egalitarian than libertarianism,⁵⁵ but he has always believed that a universalist theory is not of much use to egalitarian political movements because it refuses to recognize the importance of people's attachments and loyalties. As a result, the liberalism of Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* and of the vast literature that it inspired had impeccable egalitarian credentials but did not pay heed to the politics of difference. Like Marxism, it misunderstood the nature of equality. Arguments of Walzer such as these are commonly taken to be communitarian; really, they reflect his introduction of social democratic norms and of insights drawn from the radical democratic tradition.

Chapter 5 covers Walzer's work from the mid-1990s until 2000. In this era, he was centrally focused on the accommodation of difference, whether in civil society or in multicultural societies. I take this development to emerge out of the decline of the Soviet Union, which led to a huge resurgence in interest in civil society among Eastern European dissidents, and of the recognition that the USA was composed of vastly different cultural groups. In the 1990s, Walzer also did important research into different "regimes of toleration",⁵⁶ or the question of how different types of state had accommodated cultural difference, and began his serious research of the Jewish political tradition.

Chapter 6, the final substantive chapter, offers an account of Walzer's work in the last decade. I take Walzer to have been concerned above all with the Jewish political tradition and, even more so, with his continued reflections on the ethics of war, something that he had not written as much about in the 1990s. This demonstrates that Walzer's work is motivated by political concerns: in the Clinton-dominated 1990s, work on multiculturalism seemed a fruitful and positive way to help enhance American democracy; while Bush was President, the USA's overseas and possibly imperial entanglements forced their way to the top of any radical's attention. While such historical concerns are important, they are not determinative, and Walzer's work into the Jewish political tradition seems motivated more by personal concerns, such as his increasing interest in the state of Israel and its history that arose from his yearly visits there. Of course, it is hardly atypical for a 60-something to develop greater interest in his cultural roots and any socialist Zionist could not help but be disturbed by the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians in recent years; nonetheless, Walzer's interest in the Jewish political tradition cannot be so easily explained.

Finally, in my conclusion I demonstrate how the study of Walzer undertaken in chapters 1 through 6 supports the argument made here that Walzer's "communitarianism" arises in the melding of different traditions and reflects social democratic commitments. I flesh out the story of Walzer's career arc and of the various research programs I see him as engaging in. Finally, I consider the importance of Walzer as a contemporary political theorist. I conclude that Walzer has been fairly consistent in his response to the dilemmas that I see his work as responding to, certainly in comparison with such contemporaries as Alasdair MacIntyre or John Rawls, but has developed in accord with changing social and political realities. I conclude that that provides us with further reasons for studying his thought historically. Michael Walzer has been a key figure in the transformation in the American left since the 1970s, if not before. He is an academic political theorist of the highest rank and a public intellectual of note, who has engaged with a plethora of American radicals about how American democracy might be transformed. Any study of his political thought needs to take that into account, and this thesis does just that.

Chapter 1: The Early Writings of Michael Walzer

Michael Walzer's academic career started in 1962 when, shortly after he received his PhD from Harvard University under the supervision of Samuel Beer, he took up his first professorial position at Princeton at the age of 27. Walzer's graduate training was in government, his early teaching in "Social Science", broadly conceived,⁵⁷ his earliest publications in *Dissent* and similar magazines oriented towards coverage of current affairs, and his first book – *The Revolution of the Saints*, published in 1965, and based on his PhD dissertation – was a study of the development of Calvinism as a political movement in seventeenth century England.

Although Walzer's interest in political thought was evident in these writings, the fact that he would in later years be known primarily for his part, however critical, on the theory of "justice as fairness" developed by John Rawls,⁵⁸ which was famously satirized by Raymond Geuss as involving "neither history nor praxis",⁵⁹ might have come as something of a surprise to someone doing a study of the young Walzer's work in the mid-1960s. History and praxis might usefully be seen as the twin pillars of Walzer's thought at that time, and, indeed, throughout his career, with the latter far more than a merely academic interest: Walzer's third book is a handbook of advice to would be radical political activists on how best to organize their "movement."⁶⁰ Moreover, much of his spare time in the period was spent engaging in protest politics, in particular in opposition to the Vietnam War.⁶¹ How, then, did he come to be involved in a debate that may well have carried political philosophy to heights of abstraction uncharted since Hobbes' *Leviathan*, if not Plato's *Republic*? Is this an example of the young radical activist becoming the middle-aged armchair critic merely because of the passing of time?

This chapter explores the early part of Walzer's career in an attempt to explore the ways in which his thought developed from those days as Beer's graduate student at Harvard. I argue that, contrary to the possibility I just raised, there are many ways in which Walzer's writings in the 1950s and 1960s laid the groundwork for many of his later and more famous works. In fact, the emphasis in *The Revolution of the Saints* on the importance to Calvinism's success of its organization and discipline, as well as on the attempts by the "saints" to create a sense of community amongst their converts, and the definition of Calvinism as the "earliest form of political radicalism",⁶² helps us to see the unity in Walzer's thought both between academic theory and practical activity and between the young and the older man. Throughout Walzer's career, he has stressed the importance of shared ideas binding a community together and enabling immanent radical critique and political engagement, and the necessity of enabling people to be involved in the decision-making processes by which they are governed.

Thus, Walzer's second book, *Obligations*, published in 1970, five years after *The Revolution of the Saints* and a year before *Political Action*, is unambiguously a work in normative political theory and claims to "restate the theory of the social contract."⁶³ This claim is strikingly similar to one Rawls was to make merely a year later in *A Theory of Justice*. However, it could not be said of *Obligations* that it takes into account neither history nor praxis. Walzer's central argument in the book is that it is through their actions that men and women develop political obligations and not through inaction, tacit consent, or hypothetical consent.⁶⁴ Furthermore, the issues with which it deals – from the treatment of prisoners of war through "A Day in the Life of a Socialist Citizen"⁶⁵ – all touch on topics of concern to citizens in the United States of the day, as well as of theoretical interest. The point is that, for Walzer, normative theorizing and political activity are inextricably linked: theorizing is asinine if divorced from grounding in the life of a particular community and if unaware of anthropological and

sociological reality;⁶⁶ likewise political engagement cannot take place without ethical argument about its purposes. This has always been Walzer's viewpoint, as is demonstrated by the fact that *Obligations* was published at almost exactly the same time as *Political Action* was written.⁶⁷ He was, at one and the same time, actively engaged in a professional work of normative theory and an "amateur" work on practical politics.

The chapter considers Walzer's work from the mid-1950s until 1971. Some of Walzer's work later in the 1970s could have been considered germane to the issues touched on in this chapter, but I have left analysis of them to subsequent chapters because Walzer's next major academic works – on the questions of the tension between successful politics and the demands of morality and of regicide⁶⁸ – lead us towards Walzer's writing on the ethics of war, which forms the centerpiece of that chapter. Furthermore, this chapter already covers a longer period than any of the subsequent chapters, because Walzer's literary output was slower prior to 1970 than thereafter.

In the next section of this chapter, I provide a sketch of Walzer's academic career during the 15-year span that we are considering. The next section details the major intellectual influences on Walzer in this time of his life, namely historicized idealism, radical democracy, and normative political theory in the analytic style. The subsequent sections analyze what I take to be the major themes in Walzer's thought in the early years of his career: namely, the importance of movement politics and the difficulties that it faces; the role of history in the study of politics (Walzer's developing philosophy of history, if you will); political equality and democratic politics; the incurring of political obligations and the relationship between the citizen and the state; the impact of ideas on institutions and on communal life more generally; and the role of religion, or some other form of shared ideology, in the making of a political community.

II

In 1956, at the age of 21, Walzer graduated summa cum laude from Brandeis University with a BA in History. Having spent the next year in Cambridge, UK, on a Fulbright Fellowship, he returned to the Boston area for his graduate studies at Harvard. On leaving Harvard, Walzer, as noted above, took up a position at Princeton University. He was there from 1962 to 1966 (and he was, of course, to return to the city when becoming Foundation Professor of the Institute for Advanced Study in 1980), before returning to Harvard, where he was to be a professor for the next 15 years. *The Revolution of the Saints* was published after three of Walzer's years at Princeton, and shortly before his return to Harvard. *Obligations* was to be published in 1970, four years after Walzer had returned to Harvard. *Obligations* developed out of a series of lecture classes on the same subject that Walzer gave between 1966 and 1969.⁶⁹ Much later, he was to base *Spheres of Justice* on a class that he taught in combination with Robert Nozick in the academic year 1970-1971.⁷⁰ The class was entitled "Capitalism and Socialism," with Nozick defending the former, and Walzer the latter.⁷¹

III

In this section, I chart the major intellectual influences on Walzer's early thought. I situate Walzer as drawing predominantly on four traditions. In each case, the tradition acted as inspiration to Walzer in developing his own political theory and not as tablets in stone for him to accept uncritically. The tradition that would have been most prominent in Walzer's early life –

his life as a Jewish American – will be considered in later chapters when we turn to consideration of his later writings on the Jewish political tradition. The three other major influences are: the historicized idealism of Harvard’s Government department in the 1950s; the radical democracy of Irving Howe – Walzer’s predecessor as editor of *Dissent* – and others in the ‘movement’ from the 1950s through to the anti-Vietnam protests of the late 1960s and 1970s; and, towards the end of the 1960s, the approach to political theory that draws on the techniques of Anglo-American analytic philosophy with which Walzer became acquainted through his friendship with Robert Nozick and his membership of the Society for Ethical and Legal Philosophy.

a). *Idealism refracted through history: graduate studies in Harvard in the 1950s.*

The predominant intellectual influence on Walzer during his time at Harvard was almost unquestionably his adviser, Samuel Beer. In his preface to *The Revolution of the Saints*, Walzer credits Beer’s “ideas about the proper study of politics” as being “the major inspiration of my own thought on that same subject.”⁷²

Beer, born in 1911 and a former Rhodes scholar at Oxford as well as a Fulbright fellow, bequeathed to Walzer an interest in British political history: Beer was the author of *British Politics in the Collectivist Age*, for which he won a Woodrow Wilson Foundation Award.⁷³ As such, Beer can be said to have influenced Walzer’s choice of subjects in the PhD dissertation that was, some years later, to become *The Revolution of the Saints*. Beer’s most important influence on Walzer’s thought was in the broad-ranging, inter-disciplinary, and pragmatic conception of the study of politics that he represented. Moreover, Beer’s “approach to politics draws heavily on the idealist temper.”⁷⁴ In Beer’s first book, *The City of Reason*, he draws on his own doctoral supervisor, A. D. Lindsay of Balliol College, Oxford, as well as Bosanquet and Bradley in developing “a vision of a liberal society based on a shared understanding of reason as an ideal of conduct guided by religious intuition.”⁷⁵

Beer was also responsible for giving Walzer his first experience as a teacher, in his class Social Science 2, in which Walzer was able to expound his emerging view of Puritanism publicly.⁷⁶ Alongside Walzer as teaching assistants on Social Science 2 were future historians and sociologists, as well as political scientists, including Charles Tilly, Harry Eckstein, Klaus Epstein, and Melvin Richter.⁷⁷ It is worthy of note, in light of Walzer’s subsequent career, that he does not include philosophy as one of the disciplines into which Social Science 2 teachers were later to research. Although this may seem surprising to those familiar with Walzer’s later work, it is consistent with the idealists’ commitment to the importance of understanding social life not in terms of abstract reason but through its traditions and ideological commitments.⁷⁸

The other professors whom Walzer cites in *The Revolution of the Saints* as significant influences, and as people who read earlier versions of much of the book, were all professors of government at Harvard, and all were important researchers in political theory. They are Carl J. Friedrich, Louis Hartz, and Barrington Moore.⁷⁹ Each one of these men, with the possible exception of Moore, is also famous for working in the idealist tradition. Yet the label seems applicable also to Moore, who was most famous for his work, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, which became a crux of the approach to the study of politics that emphasized comparative historical analysis as its principal research tool.⁸⁰ Moore’s book studied the conditions in which democratic, fascist, and communist regimes came into power, providing several examples of those necessary for each type of regime to flourish.⁸¹ In Moore’s work too,

then, the historical conditions under which particular ideational regimes come to power are taken to be the best way in which to study the ideologies in question. Both Tilly, Walzer's colleague on the staff of Social Science 2, and Theda Skocpol were later to make important contributions to the study of comparative politics using techniques similar to those of Moore, their teacher at Harvard. Hartz is best known for his defense of American liberalism and development of the theory of American exceptionalism, while Friedrich was a prominent scholar of both constitutional law and totalitarianism. Friedrich, who had left Germany several years before he became professor of government at Harvard in 1936, was later involved in the drafting of the constitutions of both Israel and the German states after the Second World War.

In other words, the major interlocutors of Walzer during his days at graduate school, both his professors and his peers, were people interested in the theoretical study of politics, but whose approach to that subject was motivated by practical political concerns and whose study was steeped in historical and comparative detail. It is for this reason that this section is entitled idealism refracted through history. Unlike early variants of idealism, in which either a transcendental ideal was to be applied universally, or in which history was on the march towards the discovery of an absolute ideal, in the idealism of Beer et al to which Walzer was first exposed, ideas are dependent on particular historical and social contexts and cannot be understood in abstraction from those contexts.

In Walzer's case, one of the contexts that he drew upon was his Judaism as it applied to contemporary life. So, idealism would have appealed to him because of its compatibility with his prior personal and intellectual engagements.

b) *Radical democracy: Walzer and the movement*

Irving Howe, the editor and founder of *Dissent*, was another major intellectual influence on the young Walzer, providing an example of the role that a committed intellectual could play as a social critic and dissenter. The fact that Walzer has now worked for *Dissent* for more than 50 years is evidence of the impact on him of Howe's ideals, especially when considering that the magazine has only been in circulation since 1954. Walzer thanks Howe for his help in the writing of *Political Action*, referring to him by the term "comrade,"⁸² which indicates both their close involvement and the radically egalitarian nature of their political activism. When Walzer first met Howe, he and his soon-to-be-wife Judith were both students of Howe, the founder of *Dissent*, which Michael was to later become the editor of, and for which Judith has frequently contributed.⁸³

Walzer was on many occasions to call himself a "radical democrat," and he went on to write a book with both terms in the title.⁸⁴ For an account of what radical democracy meant to Walzer, it is worth considering *Political Action*. As I said earlier, the book was written while Walzer was writing *Obligations*, and yet in *Political Action*, he disclaims any expertise on the grounds of his work as a political scientist. Rather, says Walzer, the book is a "political response to [the American invasion of Cambodia] and to the outburst of citizen activism that followed...I cannot claim much detachment from the people whose politics is described and (often) criticized."⁸⁵ What Walzer learned from Howe and 'the movement,' in other words, is that politics is not something that can simply be studied from an academic point of view; rather, it is something that citizens must engage in constantly. This was, as we will see below, to become the leitmotif of Walzer's thought in the early stages of his career, in which he emphasized time and again the importance of political action.

Radical democracy is, then, democratic because of its emphasis on involving as wide a range of people as possible in the political process, although not everyone will want to be involved on all occasions and they must, as Walzer emphasizes in “A Day in the Life of a Socialist Citizen” be allowed to absent themselves if they so desire.⁸⁶ Radical democracy is radical because of its commitment to egalitarianism. The young Walzer frequently described his interlocutors as “comrades” and referred to himself as a socialist.⁸⁷ To some extent this is a legacy of Howe’s influence on him. *Dissent* is deliberately entitled to demonstrate its opposition to the political mainstream – and especially to its right-wing rival *Commentary* – and Howe’s biography describes his life as being one of “passionate dissent.” (This is, of course, why Judith Walzer was so surprised at how bourgeois the Howe’s lifestyle was. The word bourgeois is, of course, used far more often as a term of abuse by socialists and Marxists than by those who identify themselves as middle-class or capitalist).

Howe himself attended the City College of New York in the late 1930s and was classmates with Daniel Bell and Irving Kristol. Kristol, who went on to be managing editor of *Commentary* and is best known as one of the most prominent early neoconservatives was, however, an active Trotskyite during his days at City College. As the author of *The End of Ideology*, Bell might also seem an unlikely figure to place in a radical camp, but he too has been known to describe himself as a socialist in economic terms. At any rate, Howe had a long history of writing for leftist journals such as *Partisan Review* and *The New Republic* before he founded *Dissent* in 1954. Howe’s commitment to socialism was life-long, from his youthful involvement with the Young People’s Socialist League through to his chairmanship of the Democratic Socialists of America in the 1980s.⁸⁸ Although his politics had moved away from Marxism and towards democratic socialism by the time of his friendship with Walzer, Howe is accurately described as a radical.

The influence of thinkers such as Howe on Walzer is manifest in *Radical Principles*, but also in his earlier work such as *Political Action*. For Walzer, the purpose of political activity is to reveal and oppose injustice and oppression through “mobilization, revolt, social change.”⁸⁹ Citizen involvement in politics would ameliorate the sense of disillusionment felt by many Americans whose “government and economy have been progressively removed from the effective control of its citizens.”⁹⁰ Radical democracy, then, advocates citizen involvement for a number of reasons, but the two predominant ones are those that earn it each label: it is radical because citizen politics helps to overcome oppression; and it is democratic because citizens must have the opportunity to be involved in the political process as and when they wish.

c) *Anglo-American analytic philosophy*

In the early stages of his career, Walzer does not seem to have been closely involved with scholars whose analyses of politics drew on the abstraction prominent among those trained in analytic philosophy. It is partly for this reason that in a 2003 interview with *Imprints* magazine, Walzer said that he “spent much of the 1960s and early 1970s learning to ‘do’ political philosophy rather than doing it” and that he never could “breathe easily at the high level of abstraction that philosophy seemed to require.”⁹¹ Walzer’s modesty, of course, hides his intellectual doubts as to whether abstract philosophy was an appropriate approach to the study of politics, as he notes shortly thereafter in the same interview when saying, “I quickly got impatient with the playful extension of hypothetical cases, moving farther and farther away from the world we all lived in.”⁹² Walzer’s graduate training would have reinforced his commitment

to the importance of paying close attention to that world and not to basing our solutions to political problems on purely philosophical analysis.

However, the early years of Walzer's professorial stint at Harvard were of great importance in his intellectual trajectory, including his teaching responsibilities listed in the previous section. Nozick, Walzer's co-teacher on Capitalism and Socialism, was to become one of Walzer's closest interlocutors for many years until his untimely death in 2002. In *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, Nozick singles out Walzer above all other influences except for Barbara Nozick, saying that Nozick had benefited from trying out ideas on Walzer for "several years."⁹³ Nozick was to be Walzer's first acknowledgement in *Spheres of Justice*. Furthermore, in the interview with *Imprints* cited above, Walzer says that Nozick was, along with Rawls, one of his teachers when he "learned how to do" political philosophy in the late 1960s.⁹⁴ In the interview, Walzer again refers to the class on capitalism and socialism, describing it as a "semester-long argument."⁹⁵ Nozick, in other words, demonstrated to Walzer an alternative approach to the study of political theory, one that drew on the techniques of analysis developed in other branches of philosophy in the early part of the twentieth century.

Nozick was in many ways extreme in his application of the techniques of analytic philosophy to political theory; in *Anarchy, State and Utopia* he claims that by writing "in the mode of much contemporary philosophical work in epistemology or metaphysics," he may be criticized by those who think that "the truth about ethics and political philosophy is too serious and important to be obtained by such 'flashy' tools."⁹⁶ However, Walzer's interview with *Imprints* also acknowledges another hotbed of ideas that Walzer drew on in the late 1960s, and which he attributed as an influence in *Just and Unjust Wars*, namely the Society for Ethical and Legal Philosophy.⁹⁷ Through his involvement with the society, Walzer would have become familiar with the approach to political theory that predominated in the Rawlsian era of the 1970s, in which thought experiments abound. As Walzer was to put it in the preface to *Spheres of Justice*, such approaches tend towards the use of psychology and economics rather than the disciplines that Walzer would have been made familiar with in his days as a graduate student at Harvard, namely history, anthropology, and sociology.

The membership list of the society reads like a Who's Who of American political philosophy of the time period: apart from Walzer, Nozick, and Rawls, it also included Ronald Dworkin, Thomas Nagel, Tim Scanlon, Charles Fried, Marshall Cohen, and another key interlocutor of Walzer: Judith Jarvis Thompson. Thompson is a few years older than Walzer, having been born in 1929, and came to political theory from a different direction, namely, from moral philosophy and metaphysics. Nonetheless, as young professors at MIT and Harvard, respectively, she and Walzer struck up a very close working relationship, and he was later to show her the entire manuscript of both *Just and Unjust Wars* and *Spheres of Justice* for critical feedback.

His involvement in the Society for Ethical and Legal Philosophy, which met every month during the late 1960s, can be said to be the springboard from which Walzer became involved in debates in normative political theory that were somewhat more abstract than his original work. He says that, as a result, he tried to "write about politics in a more philosophical way,"⁹⁸ and *Obligations* can to some extent be seen as the first example of that attempt, addressing as it does a set of problems that, treated by a different author, might have turned into a treatise on "applied ethics." Nonetheless, Walzer never became so abstract a writer as his fellows in the society, and remained permanent uncomfortable with such abstraction and unconvinced by its utility, at least

in political philosophy. Throughout his career, he continued to draw more on social scientific disciplines such as anthropology or sociology than did most of the society's members.

d) *Other influences*

Two other influences on Walzer's thought in the early days of his career that must be mentioned are both familial, and they share the same name. Judith Walzer Leavitt, Michael's younger sister, is more than five years younger than him, having been born in July 1940. Now the Ruppel Bascom and Ruth Bleier Professor of the History of Medicine, the History of Science, and of Women's Studies at the University of Madison-Wisconsin, she was an undergraduate at Antioch College in the early 1960s, before going on, later in the decade, to graduate study in history – the subject that her brother studied as an undergraduate – at the University of Chicago.⁹⁹

Michael's wife, Judith Borodovko Walzer, who went on to become a professor of literature and was at one time the Provost of the New School for Social Research in New York, was involved with Michael since the mid-1950s. Judith has been a major figure in Michael's life ever since the mid-1950s, and her influence has been professional as well as personal. Michael emphasizes her importance to his work in all three of the books that he wrote in this period, and has frequently used contributions from her as editor of *Dissent*. In *The Revolution of the Saints*, he writes that Judith Walzer, by 1965 his wife, has “been my constant companion and critic during the years that I struggled to understand the Puritan saints and to write this book. Its various metamorphoses, and my own as well, are in large part her work.”¹⁰⁰ He dedicated *Obligations* to her with a quote from the book of Amos,¹⁰¹ while *Political Action* lists Judith as another of Michael's “comrades.”¹⁰²

Walzer does not appear to have been especially strongly influenced by his colleagues from his first stint in Princeton, at least not to the extent that Albert Hirschman and Clifford Geertz were to influence him at the Institute, but he does thank Paul Sigmund for reading the section of *The Revolution of the Saints* on “the ancient science of angelology.”¹⁰³

This completes the picture of the key influences on Walzer's from the start of his career until 1971. It should be emphasized that those influences are both academic and activist, and include many of those involved in *Dissent* and in *The New Republic*, the magazines in which most of Walzer's early publications appeared. We now turn to consideration of the themes of those writings.

IV

Political action is both the title of one of Walzer's books and the leitmotif of the young professor's thought. It is the central thread that binds together his three major books, as well as the numerous articles he wrote for *Dissent* and the *New Republic*. Yet to list political action as a theme is not to say very much. For Walzer, political activity is a fundamental requirement of a democratic system of politics - and he is, in his own words, an “unreconstructed democrat.” On Walzer's account, “the democratic system offers a standing invitation to the rest of us to enlist in political life.”¹⁰⁴ In fact, in Walzer's view, without political action there is, really, no politics as such. He defines political action as “action with or for others” and states that we “become political men when we act for public and not private reasons, or at least for public in addition to private reasons, and when we imagine our effects in terms of other people as well as

ourselves.”¹⁰⁵ In other words, if the motivating force behind an action is not public-spirited, at least in part, then the action is not a political action, and if a person does not undertake any public-spirited actions then that person is not political. We are political only in so far as we consider the interests of a wide body of people and not simply our own interests.

Walzer’s account of the essence of democratic politics clearly carries significant echoes of Rousseau’s distinction between the general will and the will of all.¹⁰⁶ For Rousseau, citizens in a democratic polity ought to orient themselves for political purposes towards what they perceive to be the interest of the community as a whole. For Walzer, we are political only when we do this. Indeed, Walzer’s *Obligations* reads for significant portions like an exercise in Rousseau studies, with Walzer critically examining Rousseau’s arguments about the right to rebel,¹⁰⁷ the obligation to die for the state,¹⁰⁸ the right to withdraw from the state,¹⁰⁹ the nature of citizenship and the obligation to live for the state,¹¹⁰ and the nature of the social contract.¹¹¹ There is, however, a significant way in which Walzer differs from Rousseau: namely, although they agree that being political is being publicly-oriented, Walzer rejects Rousseau’s view that the relevant scope of politics includes goes beyond the scope of action, strictly understood. According to Walzer, political obligations are incurred by what we have actually done: “Men are bound by their significant actions, not by their feelings or thoughts; actions is the crucial language of moral commitment.”¹¹² We cannot be bound to uphold a particular moral good unless we have said that we will do so ourselves.

This is the major argument of *Obligations* and it forms a powerful counter to the argument, most famously put forward by Locke in *Two Treatises on Government*, that people can be obliged by acquiescence, or tacit consent, and to the view, advanced by Rawls contemporaneously to *Obligations*, that coercive ties are binding if it can reasonably be argued that disembodied people concerned with living together would hypothetically consent to those ties. Walzer’s insistence on considering the behavior of actual human beings in concrete settings thus forms a powerful counter to the proto-liberal, liberal and contemporary libertarian views of many of his friends in the Society for Ethical and Legal Philosophy. Yet his hostility to non-pragmatic thought is also aimed at Marx. In “A Day in the Life of a Socialist Citizen,” Walzer takes Oscar Wilde’s criticism of socialism as an ideology that would require “too many evenings” to be “one of the most significant criticisms of socialist theory that has ever been made.”¹¹³ The early Marx, who in *The German Ideology* drew a picture of human beings in socialist society being freed from the division of labor and hence able to live as they pleased, ignored the importance of political activity in any such society. Walzer insists, against Marx, that self-government will always be both necessary and beneficial and notes that “Self-government is a very demanding and time-consuming business... Ultimately, it may well require almost continuous activity, and life will become a succession of meetings.”¹¹⁴ Both liberals and Marxists, on Walzer’s view, downplay the importance of being involved in deciding how we are to live together and make decisions for ourselves, whether in our society or in potential future societies.

The argument, put in a slightly different way, helps us to understand another long-term theme in Walzer’s thought and one of the motivating factors behind his writing of *The Revolution of the Saints*. Walzer is concerned that people should actually live in communities that share a common life and sense of purpose and not merely that the arrangements that they live under do not preclude such a life. As he puts it, “it is surely not the case that being and feeling obligated are the same. It is not enough that a common life be felt or thought to exist; there must *be* a common life.”¹¹⁵ The development of a common life does not come about

overnight or spontaneously, of course, and how to build one forms a major part of the advice to movement activists given in *Political Action*. Examples of this can be seen throughout the book, but are particularly striking in Walzer's insistence on the importance of finding an appropriate "constituency" that will advocate the cause of the movement and in his intricate account of how, when, and why to develop coalitions with other activist movements.¹¹⁶

Walzer's interest in the formation of a sense of community also helps to explain what interested him about Calvinism. This is not an obvious interest; indeed, he starts *The Revolution of the Saints* by stating that, when he began his research into the book, he found the choice to become a Puritan to be both "strange and disturbing" and thought that "Calvinist saintliness... has scarred us all."¹¹⁷ Despite its seeming lack of congeniality to a young Jewish man in the mid-twentieth century, Calvinist Puritanism had much to teach a young political activist, not just because he felt it to be the earliest example of radical political activism, as stated above, but because of the remarkable degree of discipline that the saints brought to their personal and social activities.¹¹⁸ Besides being a useful example to those in the movement who lacked such discipline, Calvinist discipline was also a crucial community builder. In Calvinism, for the first time, "political community" was seen as depending on the activity of the members of the community.¹¹⁹ According to Walzer, "Puritan zeal was not a private passion; it was instead a highly collective emotion and it imposed upon the saints a new and impersonal discipline... Calvinist conscience gave to war and to politics... a new sense of method and purpose."¹²⁰

Yet Calvinism is, for Walzer, more than simply the stellar example of movement politics managing to create a following. It is that: as is shown, for example, by Calvin's ability to persuade French converts to give up their family ties to join the "fellowship of faithful men" in Geneva.¹²¹ It is also, and importantly for Walzer, the Calvinists who effected a "switch in emphasis of political thought from the prince to the saint (or the band of saints) and [who] then constructed a theoretical justification for independent political action."¹²² Calvinism's importance to Walzer, is, thus, twofold: it emphasizes the ordinary person as the key player in political life, and both encourages and justifies the independent action of such a person, and it places that person within a disciplined and unified "band" rather than conceiving of him or her as an individual of the sort valorized by much seventeenth and eighteenth century political thought, particularly that in the social contract tradition. For all its repressiveness, therefore, Calvinism as a movement has much that appealed to Walzer's political imagination.

So, I have singled out political action as the key theme in Walzer's thought in the early part of his career because it combines many of the disparate strands of his thought. The work of the early Walzer was extraordinarily multi-faceted. He wrote for both academic and popular audiences, on contemporary and historical topics, on theoretical and empirical issues, on topics of importance to both liberal and socialist thought, on religious and secular matters. In several years the topics on which he opined were varied enough to form the basis of many an academic's entire career. Consider, for example, 1967, which was admittedly a prolific year for the new Harvard professor. In that year, Walzer published articles on the US intelligence services' efforts against the Soviet bloc, the impact of the Truman Doctrine on post-war Europe, the relationship between the exodus and revolutionary thought, the extent to which moral norms apply during war, people's rights against the government, and the importance of symbols in political thought.¹²³ Political action is in many ways the underlying theme behind those different interests; in particular, it is a constant in his three books of the period.

It should be noted that Walzer's interest in political action was by no means over after 1971. One of his major publications of the mid-1970s included the phrase in its title.¹²⁴ However, that article marks a slight shift in emphasis on Walzer's part, because it addresses the question of the tension between morality and the duties of political office. As such, it sets aside the Calvinist emphasis on the band of saints and returns to the theme of the prince. Moreover, it anticipates Walzer's writings on the just war, and in particular on the supreme emergency.

The provenance of Walzer's interest in action is similarly plural. It may well be the case that his academic interest in politics as a subject of study developed out of his personal involvement in various movements, as in *Just and Unjust Wars* he says that his interest was first stimulated by the US involvement in Vietnam. Doubtless, also, the impact of Beer and Moore played a pivotal part. Unlike those of Walzer's contemporaries who dominated the Society for Ethical and Legal Philosophy, the work of Beer and Moore was oriented largely towards comparative historical analysis, thus paying greater attention to real issues that do or have affected particular human beings, and to the impact of ideas in the development of political institutions. For Beer, and for Walzer, ideas are most usefully studied in the institutional context in which they arise, and institutions cannot be understood as separate from the ideas that make them up. Hence, Walzer's thoughts on political action are inextricably linked with many of the other themes in his early work.

V

Calvinism, then, appealed to Walzer because it was a successful example of a movement that encouraged communal political action. However, what initially made Walzer so uneasy about Calvinism was that it did not encourage egalitarian communities and did not promote action because that would encourage the self-determination of the people acting, as Walzer would wish, but because it better enabled the service of God. Unlike the Catholic Church, and unlike Lutheranism, Calvinism was "thisworldly" in that it "appropriated worldly means and usages."¹²⁵ Moreover, its organization, its discipline, and its promotion of activism made it, like "radicalism in general," "an aspect of that broad historical process which contemporary writers call 'modernization'."¹²⁶ However, Calvinism was not a modernist movement: it was related "not with modernity, but with modernization...with the process far more significantly than with its outcome."¹²⁷ For Walzer, modernity emerged through later groups of men and women "*working upon*" the heritage bequeathed to them by Calvinism.¹²⁸ Although Calvinism prepared people for such elements of modernity that were absent in the medieval world as "self-government and democratic participation,"¹²⁹ the relation between it and "the liberal world" is "perhaps one of historical preparation, but not at all of theoretical contribution...there was much to be forgotten and much to be surrendered before the saint could become a liberal."¹³⁰

These comments explain why Walzer was intrigued by Calvinism but also in certain ways repelled by it. Walzer himself is critical of much in contemporary liberalism, but self-government, collectively conceived, is one of his key priorities and democratic participation is of the utmost importance to him. Calvinism may have created conditions in which those conditions could once more be realistic possibilities, and in a more inclusive way than in the ancient world, but it did not do so for the reasons that Walzer would wish. Which brings us to another key theme of Walzer's thought in the 1950s and 60s: the ways in which political action serve to eliminate inequality and injustice. He concludes *Political Action* with a "Call to Political Action," explaining that a "quiet and routine politics often conceals injustice and oppression,

while ‘interesting times’ are moments not only of risk but also of opportunity – for mobilization, revolt, social change. And citizen politics is one of the most important ways in which opportunity can be seized.”¹³¹ Political action for Walzer is not simply a good in itself: it is key means by which we can come to know our society and ourselves and make a fairer world for us and for our descendents. Citizen activists will not, on Walzer’s account, “win glory, “ as one of his central pieces of advice is that the movement needs to be limited in its ambitions and to avoid revolutionary goals, but they are the only people who “*can carry us forward to a society less oppressive, less unjust, more routinely democratic than the one we have now.*”¹³² It is this aspect of political activism that is missing from Calvinism. In so far as it is concerned for justice, its conception of justice is somewhat different from that of Walzer, because of its view of the state as a necessary “order of repression.”¹³³

For Walzer, political participation is both a means to greater equality and a source of personal inspiration. Anticipating by more than a decade the work of Michael Sandel,¹³⁴ Walzer argued that the USA was in the grip of a “more profound crisis” even in “political moments of peace and equality,” because the country was “a society whose government and economy have been progressively removed from the effective control of its citizens... whose citizens feel themselves to be powerless and disorganized.”¹³⁵ This sense of powerlessness had a debilitating impact on citizen politics, pushing into the political margins and tending towards inchoate forms without “collective discipline”¹³⁶ or purpose. What was even worse than Americans feelings of powerlessness was the fact that they *were* powerless, which had led to a drift towards “extremity and outrage” among citizen activists.¹³⁷

Walzer’s insistence upon the importance of political activity in both the development of a more just society and a sense of identity among its inhabitants helps to explain his critique of both liberal and Marxist theory on these points, as well as tying his writings in *Political Action* to the more or less contemporary work in *Obligations*. Remember that Walzer said that a day in the life of a socialist citizen would necessarily involve meetings. Marx’s repost might have been expected to be that in a plentiful society, meetings were unnecessary because disputes would not arise and that the object of achieving a more just society would not arise under socialism, whether because justice is a remedial virtue or because socialism is already just. Walzer would contend that the object of the political meeting is not simply to allocate scarce resources or positions of power and that the meeting is not the only form of political activism available. He argues that “in an entirely free society” there would be “the democratic politics of shared work and perpetual activism” as well as “the open and leisurely culture of part-time work, criticism, second-guessing, and burlesque.”¹³⁸ Criticism is itself a form of politics. The problem, as Walzer sees it, is that in a liberal society most critics are “men out of office,” whereas, in “a radically democratic society [the most effective critics] would be men who stay away from meetings, perhaps for months at a time, and only then discover that something outrageous has been perpetrated that must be mocked or protested.”¹³⁹ Walzer wants to allow for the possibility that many citizens will not participate in political life – they are, in his terminology, alienated¹⁴⁰ – without this in any way diminishing their ability to participate in the future, should they wish to, for as long or short a period of time as they wish to do so. Thus, the political meeting will be a necessary fixture of a future society regardless of its material resources.

Furthermore, Walzer argues that an important purpose of political activity is to participate in the decision-making procedure by which a society determines its particular view of the good life. This is, unlike in much liberal theory, something that people must do in common rather than individually. It is for this reason that Walzer takes very seriously the question of

whether people can be obligated to live for the state. He argues, “to be obligated to live for the political community (or for the king, or for the revolution) is to have a reason for living.”¹⁴¹ To be clear, this is not something that the community can claim over a person without that person’s consent. It is important to bear in mind that the political theory of *Obligations* is grounded for the most part in the claim that people’s political obligations arise from their explicit actions. What Walzer argues is that the obligation to live for the state is an obligation that can be freely incurred: the right to live is not in this sense inalienable, but can be ceded by an individual who commits him or herself to a particular political community.¹⁴²

Walzer’s argument that people are free to join any community they like and that it is for the community to determine its moral norms is intimately related to what he calls his commitment to radical democracy, or, later on, to his “radical particularism.”¹⁴³ This stance has led many to criticize his work for being relativistic. Consideration of whether Walzer is accurately described as a relativist, and whether pointing out that such a label applies to him means to criticize him, will be left to a later chapter, although it is important to note this major continuity in his thought between *Obligations* and such later works as *Spheres of Justice* and *Interpretation and Social Criticism*.¹⁴⁴ For our present purposes, the point is that Walzer valorizes political action in large part because of its role in creating a genuine community and the concomitant citizens, whether those who “share in ruling and being ruled,” in Aristotle’s terms, or those who are ardently non-political.¹⁴⁵ Hence his insistence that there actually be a shared life, rather than the mere perception of one.

VI

In this section, I deal with the young Walzer’s thoughts on the importance of a shared ideology in political life, touching also on his writings about religion. Walzer has, of course, always seen being Jewish as an important part of his identity, and this has been reflected at various points in his academic career, from his writings on Judaism,¹⁴⁶ to his position on the Board of Governors of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and his annual trips to Jerusalem, and even arguably to his writings on specific political topics that have commonly been of interest to the Jewish tradition and in which Walzer’s arguments often demonstrate the influence of his Judaism.¹⁴⁷ Even his attendance at Brandeis University, long the American university with the highest concentration of Jewish students, may fall into this category. Yet in his early writings, Walzer touched on questions of Jewish identity relatively rarely, and it is in his dealings with Christianity in *The Revolution of the Saints* that religion looms largest. However, his thoughts on Calvinist identity seem to relate to his arguments about the importance of communal membership and to his advice on finding a “constituency” in *Political Action*, and so they will be considered together.

Walzer takes seriously the possibilities of oppression and of conscientious objection, dedicating a chapter to each in *Obligations*. He argues that in order to write about oppression, an “intellectual” must not merely seek for “empathy” or “understanding” but must try to both imaginatively and intellectually enter into the “situation, ideology, arguments, and choices” of those concerned, for only then can the “right of criticism” be established.¹⁴⁸ In order to undertake social criticism, we must join ourselves with the group that we are attempting to criticize. Likewise, in order to take up the cause of the oppressed, we must attempt to become like an insider. Here, in *Obligations*, Walzer anticipates the arguments that he would later develop at greater length in such writings as *Interpretation and Social Criticism* and *Thick and Thin*.¹⁴⁹ The

oppressed, on Walzer's accounts are, importantly, worthy of being understood as oppressed *citizens*¹⁵⁰ and are, as such, entitled to attempt to transform their right of citizenship into an actual membership. Simply put, oppressed minorities in our world form a community that is itself part of a broader democratic society and to demonstrate the injustice of their position the group "takes advantage of democratic rules in order to expose their hypocrisy. But if the rules yield advantages, they are not entirely hypocritical. Then they must be respected, and first of all by the activist."¹⁵¹ Walzer seems to imply what he would later make explicit: namely, that campaigns against injustice and oppression must be undertaken within the framework of a set of norms and institutional practice that imply a certain degree of shared ideology. Walzer does not entirely rule out what he, quoting Locke, calls the "liberty to appeal to heaven" but he does insist that it exists "only when heaven is the only appeal."¹⁵² We may take this to suggest a degree of continuity with the later Walzer, who would argue that a thin universal morality exists underlying much thicker and more detailed particular moralities. The thicker moralities require both a set of institutional arrangements and a sense of shared ideology.¹⁵³

The "thick and thin" argument does not only apply across national boundaries. It also in important ways carries implications for relationships within a particular state. This is why the problem of conscientious objection, and indeed the problem of alienated citizens who do not desire to engage with the political process except at intervals of their own choosing, is taken so seriously. Walzer argues that in the contemporary world the demands of conscience require that conscript armies ought to be simply abolished and that doing so would not endanger the political community.¹⁵⁴ He says that, "what conscience most requires in the modern world is freedom and not toleration, the ability to act with minimal restraint in the political arena and not mere exemption from state service."¹⁵⁵ This is because toleration implies acceptance of the opinions of the minority but also exclusion of those opinions from the policy-formation process. Freedom, on the other hand, would "open the way for political opponents of a particular war to function freely in competition with army recruiters."¹⁵⁶ All of which is, I take it, a way of saying that the contemporary pluralist world is one of myriad overlapping but separate viewpoints each of which must have a chance to influence policy because of the disparate shared ideologies of various groups.

The overlapping nature of group ideology also underlies much of Walzer's advice in *Political Action*. There he insists that one of the earliest tasks of the movement is to find a constituency. That constituency "is not given" although it "presumably has objective characteristics; it recognizably exists in the sense that men and women sharing those characteristics exist. But it is not organized...nor does it act as a single body."¹⁵⁷ Those who would take up the cause share something: their lives are in an important sense affected by a particular policy issue, or their educational backgrounds have encouraged them to take up the case of an oppressed group, or their religious identity puts them at odds with state practice in some way. However, this similarity only relates to a certain part of their lives. Moreover, it may be something that a particular group shares, to some extent, in common with other constituencies. This is what makes coalition-formation possible, and also explains its importance. For Walzer, "alliances and coalitions are possible and necessary...it is the aim of political action...to get people into the same bed who never imagined they could take a peaceful walk together."¹⁵⁸ Conflict amongst alliances members is inevitable, even "among groups with...overlapping goals" and alliances should normally be temporary and on specific issues.¹⁵⁹ However, part of forming a constituency will involve the making of alliances, with the aim of

encouraging a particular party or office-seeker to take notice of the issue the movement is raising.¹⁶⁰

A key feature of Walzer's analysis of political action is, then, that any community in a modern pluralist society will be made up of overlapping groups sharing a fundamental but thin set of ideas that vary on less crucial but more numerous matters. Calvinism is of interest to Walzer in part as another instantiation of this phenomenon. As Walzer points out,

Ideologies undergo a process of change and development. . . Men act and explain their actions in ideological terms. They organize and explain their organizations to each other. In doing these things, they continually transform the language, images, and concepts that are their means of expression. This transformation is worked out in different ways. Frightened and uncertain men often bring extraordinarily different, even contradictory expressive modes into uneasy and usually temporary harmony. . . men driven by the pressures of rapid social change or political defeat and persecution may adopt a new ideology with astonishing recklessness.¹⁶¹

This quote provides us with a significant clue to the topic of the next section, on Walzer's theory of history and the impact of ideas on institutions. For present purposes, the point is that groups that share some sort of ideology will nonetheless differ on important points because of their perception of the situation that they face and their place in society.

So, says Walzer, the Huguenots and the Marian exiles came to manufacture significantly different versions of Calvinist theory and practice because of the dissimilarity between the groups' circumstances.¹⁶² Walzer compares the two groups in order to provide "a clear illustration of the interaction of concrete, interested men and abstract symbols and ideas. The contrast between the two groups is especially interesting because both worked with essentially the same intellectual stockpile."¹⁶³ Despite the similarity in their ideological foundations, the Huguenot version of Calvinism was markedly less radical than that of the Marian exiles. The former "made of Calvinism a doctrine that trained and fortified the French nobility for a new political role,"¹⁶⁴ by fusing Protestantism with the remnants of the feudal system.¹⁶⁵ The latter "transformed Calvin's conception of the saint into an ideal around which men without established social interests might rally."¹⁶⁶ The exiles were uninterested in debates about the nature of the state; their politics was one of "denunciation"¹⁶⁷ of any claims to sovereignty that did not promote the glory of God. All established law was without value to the exiles in a way that it never was for the Huguenots.¹⁶⁸ The difference in the approaches of the two groups to such questions as sovereign authority and the rights of rulers demonstrate for Walzer the way in which ideologies fuse with their contexts and how communities that share a thin morality may differ in institutional interest. Nevertheless, were Walzer to give advice to the Huguenots and the Marian exiles on how to advance their respective causes, he would probably suggest that a temporary alliance could help both groups.

Walzer's interest in religion, at least in his younger days, is primarily in religion as a social force. He cares more about how religious ideas helped shape communities and gave them opportunities to affect their interaction with the wider world than he is with questions of theology.¹⁶⁹ He sees the Calvinists as a fine example of integrated and disciplined social groups, and of ones that shared some ideological tenets while differing on the implementation of those tenets.

VII

Walzer's arguments about the ways in which religious groups implemented Calvinist ideas in different ways also tie in to his thoughts on the impact of ideas on institutions. This is the area in which Walzer was probably most strongly influenced by Samuel Beer. In earlier sections, I referred to it also as relating to his theory of history, for reasons that will become clear as we proceed.

For Walzer, as we saw, ideologies are subject to various modes of implementation depending on particular circumstances. The Huguenots, as French noblemen, established for themselves a different type of Puritanism than did the Marian exiles, a group which had left England after the ascension of Queen Mary, a Catholic, to the throne. Ideas overlapped with material circumstances, or the actors' perceptions of those circumstances, to create particular sets of institutional arrangement. This is what Walzer had in mind in the quote in the previous section about how people transform the concepts in their language in explaining their actions to each other ideologically. As a result, it does not make sense to study the history of political thought, or the history of ideas more generally, as though we were studying abstracted systems of thought and evaluating them according to a preset notion of rationality. In his interview with *Imprints* magazine, Walzer talks of how thinkers such as Nozick and Rawls led a return of philosophical interest in public affairs, before commenting that for him, "there was no return; I had never been interested in anything else."¹⁷⁰ Philosophy cannot be separated from public affairs because the language and the concepts used in formulating philosophical arguments are themselves the result of a long history of social organization and arrangement. Therefore, to attempt to evaluate arguments as though they meant to the people who made them exactly what they would mean to us is futile. As he argued in *Obligations*, to come to terms with an argument involves "imaginatively entering into and intellectually joining" the "situation, ideology, arguments, and choices" available.¹⁷¹ So, for example, it makes no sense to treat early modern thinkers such as Hobbes, or for that matter Calvin, as analytic philosophers frequently attempt to: namely, by parsing their argument into the barest and most purely intellectual of forms and then treating it as a piece of logic.¹⁷² Rather, we must consider the way in which terms in the argument were used persuasively in the 16th and 17th centuries, as well as the purposes for which the arguments were made.

So far the Walzer I have described seems to have an account of how to study the history of ideas that bears more than a passing resemblance to that which Quentin Skinner has spent his career trying to promote.¹⁷³ However, Walzer frequently does exactly what Skinner counsels against; namely, he employs the arguments of much earlier authors – Hobbes, Rousseau, Marx and Mill are probably the most frequent of these¹⁷⁴ – in developing his own positions, and is not afraid to reject some of what he is considering. Why is it that Walzer is willing to do this when he seems to take on board many of Skinner's arguments about the dangers of trans-contextual theorizing? The answer takes us to the heart of Walzer's conception of political theory.

Part of the answer comes right at the beginning of *Obligations* and is implicit in Walzer's argument throughout that book, and in later works. Indeed, we have already referred to it in passing. Namely, Walzer responds to Sidney Hook's argument that originality in the theory of political obligation "is almost always a sign of error" by stating simply that, "it is not all that clear anymore what the conventional wisdom is."¹⁷⁵ In other words, Walzer takes intellectual traditions and ideologies to have a much less static character than the reading of Skinner I just

put forward might suggest he has. For Walzer, as we saw, people continually debate with each other about the meaning of their ideologies and about the language and concepts that they use in formulating those debates. Many terms will be essentially contested. There is no set answer to the question of what particular authors must have meant by using such and such a term, and although it makes no sense to treat their arguments as though the meanings of the terms were obvious, this does not preclude continuing attempts to come to understand what commitments particular examples of different ideologies may have had. As with his writings on social criticism, Walzer strongly argues for the conflict that is inherent in any tradition and the scope that that affords for radical immanent critique.

Of course, Skinner might accept all of this, and say that historical interpretation of an author is one thing, mining of authors for nuggets that can be of use to us is another. Walzer, however, does this. Why? The answer seems to be that because Walzer's notion of tradition is quite loose, he thinks that many of the ideologies with which he is dealing are ones that share enough in common with us for contemporaries to consider themselves as being in some way part of the same tradition. For example, in *Obligations*, he clearly sees himself as partaking in a debate within the social contract tradition. Later on, he sought to "recapture the just war for political and moral theory."¹⁷⁶ As a result, he was unafraid to look back "to that religious tradition within which Western politics and morality were first given shape."¹⁷⁷ Clearly he thinks that that tradition can be recaptured. This means, in Walzer's non-academic language, that the "constituency" in question is always one that is up for grabs and not preordained. It is legitimate and useful for historians or theorists to seek to enter into debate with figures from the past, so long as they seek to enter into the intellectual universe of the people with whom they would debate. As an ideology can be manifested in myriad ways, it is incorrect to say that ideologies from the past must be seen simply as historical relics. Rather, ideologies such as that of the social contract theorists can be transformed in various ways into different variants of themselves in our day. All this comes from the facts that ideas are always formed in a set of material circumstances, and that, in the process of arguing about those ideas; each particular group of people continually makes and remakes their own version of the tradition. That process of making and remaking of ideas is one that never ceases for as long as we have a tradition of intellectual argument.

It was, therefore, inevitable that the Huguenots and the Marian exiles would come to develop different versions of Calvinist Puritanism, not only because of the different material situations of the two groups, but also because of the fact that the two groups were made up of different people debating the traditions in different ways. Even had the material conditions facing them been almost identical, the simple fact of different ideas being put to work at a set of problems, concepts and linguistic usages would have come to mean that the versions of Calvinism were not identical. For Walzer, in other words, history is a continual process of individual men and women forming and reforming various overlapping groups and, in those groups, debating with each other over how to live their lives in common. Those debates are informed by the material conditions prevalent at any particular time, but they also inform those conditions. Walzer might echo Marx in saying that we make our own history but not under conditions of our own choosing, and, if he were to be asked whether he was an idealist or a materialist, he would certainly refuse to answer the question with a simple identification with one camp. Rather he would enter into debate over the meaning of those terms.

That concludes our account of Michael Walzer's thought between 1955 and 1971. As we have seen, the central theme of that work is the meaning and importance of political action and the various uses to which it can be put. In the 1970s, Walzer was to continue to insist on the possibilities that radical political activists could achieve, as well as turning to consideration of the ethics of war, and of political life more generally. In doing so, he was to become a major figure in the academy, while remaining prominent outside it through his contributions to *Dissent*, the *New Republic* and elsewhere. His writings would, after about 1974, be less historical in scope for about a decade, until the publication of *Exodus and Revolution*¹⁷⁸ and his later work on the Jewish political tradition. Nonetheless, he retained most of the beliefs about how to study political thought and its history that he held in the 1960s and his work has always been replete with historical details, as well as with appeals to history to furnish him with examples of communities in inner debate. Indeed, in *Spheres of Justice*, he comments that the most obvious way in which he differs from Rawls is in the disciplines to which they appeal, as his examples are mostly historical and anthropological, while Rawls draws on psychology and economics.¹⁷⁹ Likewise, in *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, the biblical prophets are to become the historical model for Walzer's notion of the social critic as someone who points out to a community how it is failing to live up to the standards that it claims to live by and therefore makes possible an immanent critique.¹⁸⁰

So, although at the start of the chapter it appeared that the young Walzer had interests that differed markedly from what he has come to research, thorough consideration shows a good degree of continuity between his early historical writings, such as *The Revolution of the Saints*, his activist writings, such as *Political Action*, and the works of normative political theory for which he became most famous, starting with *Obligations*, but continuing through *Just and Unjust Wars*, *Radical Principles*, *Spheres of Justice*, *Interpretation and Social Criticism* and *Thick and Thin* to his most recent monograph, *Politics and Passion*, which calls for a "sociologically more informed" liberalism.¹⁸¹

Chapter Two: The 1970s

The 1970s was a key decade in Michael Walzer's career, during which he went from being a talented young professor to a major name in the field of political theory. Walzer spent the 70s at Harvard, before taking up a position as Foundation Professor of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton in 1980, a reflection of the extent of his reputation at the end of the decade, by which time he was 45. The 70s saw the publication of what remains arguably Walzer's most famous book, *Just and Unjust Wars*, which was largely successful in its stated aim, which was to "recapture the just war for political and moral theory,"¹⁸² and which also made Walzer a widely read author among students of international relations.

Walzer had worked on *Just and Unjust Wars* throughout the first two-thirds of the decade,¹⁸³ and set aside converting into book form his half of the Capitalism and Socialism class that he taught with Robert Nozick until after he had outlined his thoughts on the ethics of war,¹⁸⁴ but he also maintained a steady stream of publications on left-wing activism in American politics and the tension between morality and involvement in political life. A selection of the former are gathered together in *Radical Principles*, which was published in 1980,¹⁸⁵ but which contains two articles written as early as 1964 and reprints "A Day in the Life of a Socialist Citizen," which was discussed in the previous chapter in the context of its inclusion in *Obligations*.¹⁸⁶ The most prominent of the latter are Walzer's 90-page introduction to *Regicide and Revolution*, a collection of speeches given at the trial of Louis XVI, which argues in favor of the executions of both Louis and the English and Scottish King Charles I in 1649,¹⁸⁷ and an article on *Philosophy and Public Affairs* expressly devoted to the question of whether political leaders can override moral principles in times of national crisis.¹⁸⁸

In this chapter, I concentrate on these three sets of work – justice in war, the American Left, and political morality – offering explications of their central themes and arguments and analyses of the themes that underlie them. I also consider the ways in which Walzer's work in the 1970s picks up on and develops themes from his earlier work, such as the application of his research on Puritanism in *The Revolution of the Saints* to an argument about the execution of Charles I in *Regicide and Revolution*, or foreshadows later arguments. The paradigm case of the latter is the article "In Defense of Equality,"¹⁸⁹ which, centering on the argument that "Different goods should be distributed to different people for different reasons,"¹⁹⁰ provides an early working through of the theory of distributive spheres and complex equality that Walzer was to expound in *Spheres of Justice*. Indeed, in *Radical Principles*, Walzer notes that "In Defense of Equality" is "a sketch of a larger argument that I hope to make in a forthcoming book."¹⁹¹ *Radical Principles* can, as a whole, be seen as a bridge between Walzer's earliest work in normative political theory in *Obligations* and his fullest statement of that theory in *Spheres of Justice*, as I will argue later on.

The chapter also provides an account of the linkages between Walzer's thought in the 1970s and, in so doing, makes an argument as to the central themes of his thought in this period, which are taken to be: the relationship between socialism, social democracy, and liberalism; how political theory and political practice inform each other;¹⁹² the impact of the Vietnam War in the USA; and politics as a realm of moral dilemmas. In discussing this last theme, *Just and Unjust Wars* and "The Moral Standing of States" are brought into conversation with Walzer's writings on domestic politics. A fuller discussion of this topic will occur in the next chapter, when Walzer's two major books, *Just and Unjust Wars* and *Spheres of Justice*, are put into critical conversation in an attempt to answer the question posed by Brian Orend about the compatibility

of Walzer's culturally specific theory of distributive justice and his just war theory, which Walzer takes to be "in its philosophical form a doctrine of human rights,"¹⁹³ and which may, as he notes, seem to suggest a philosophical account of personality. Before we can consider this question, it is necessary to set out the argument of *Spheres of Justice*, so detailed discussion of this point will be postponed for now.

II

In this section, I briefly explore the context of Walzer's thought in the 1970s. As stated above, Walzer was a professor at Harvard throughout the decade, an era in which, as he noted in *Radical Principles*, the activism of the 1960s rapidly dropped off and the organization of the New Left disintegrated, leaving the movement a site of "sectarian in-fighting, ideological debauch, and pseudorevolutionary violence."¹⁹⁴ As a result, there was a "massive withdrawal from political involvement" and a "mood of cynicism about the possibilities of political success" making it "clear that any sort of sustained leftist activity is going to be extremely difficult."¹⁹⁵

Walzer wrote those words in 1972, a year before the OPEC oil crisis, and several years before the triumph of the New Right. It should be noted that Walzer had glumly foreseen the rise of an activist movement on the right as early as 1964. In his review of the Goldwater presidential campaign, he noted that, "Goldwater's candidacy came...too soon. Right-wing politics waits on crisis; the candidate did not wait...Today there are a great many Americans, but not enough, available for a right-wing politics: will there be more...in 1968, 1972, 1976?"¹⁹⁶ It is arguable that the 1968 election of Richard Nixon to the White House was more the result of opposition to the Vietnam War than a general drift to the right in American politics and that the 1980 election of Ronald Reagan was the occasion in which there were enough Americans available for a right-wing politics. In any case, by the end of the 1970s, the process that Walzer had discussed in 1972 had continued until the point had been reached in which the political left was not so much disorganized as "invisible."¹⁹⁷ By 1979, Walzer was to view the New Left as being in "pastoral retreat;" it was not, in Walzer's view, in abeyance, but it had retreated to the sphere of local politics and worker organization, fighting smaller battles and performing "good works"¹⁹⁸ – a term more characteristically ascribed to the Puritans Walzer discussed in *The Revolution of the Saints* – on university campuses, in trade unions, and the like.¹⁹⁹

In other words, the 1970s was a decade in which political activism of the sort Walzer had partaken in and valorized in the 1960s gradually became a less prominent feature of American life until, in the 1980s, it was indeed the right that dominated political activity. This is no doubt part of the reason why Walzer focused less on questions of activism as the 1970s proceeded, and in any case it might be expected that a man in his 40s would have less zeal for the movement than one in his late 20s and early 30s.

It may also be worthy of note in this regard that the mid-1970s was the period in which Walzer was most involved in the Society for Ethical and Legal Philosophy, which was discussed in the previous chapter. He himself states that his decision to develop the argument of *Just and Unjust Wars*, which was written in that time period, "through historical examples" was "in part a reaction against the hypothetical cases of my friends."²⁰⁰ No doubt Walzer's training at Harvard and the influence on him of Beer and historicized idealism would in any case have pushed him in that direction. Furthermore, his influence on the Society can be clearly seen in the fact that the journal that developed out of it in 1971 was entitled *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, rather than "Political Philosophy" or something of that ilk.²⁰¹

That said, even Walzer's articles on political activity are, from the mid-1970s onwards, either less directly about his experience in the American Left or seek to explicate the feeling of failure that had engulfed the movement.²⁰² This fact sits somewhat uncomfortably with the fact that *Radical Principles* centers much more specifically on the American political experience than does *Obligations*. By the end of the 1970s, then, Walzer was as concerned with US political experience as ever, but somewhat less sanguine about the prospects for political activism than he had been, largely, no doubt, due to the change in the American political climate over the course of the 1970s.

Furthermore, the field of political theory had been completely transformed by the publication, in 1971, of John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*. Despite the thriving school of historicized idealism in which Walzer had been immersed as a graduate student at Harvard, there was a widespread perception in the 1950s and 60s that, as Peter Laslett puts it in the first edition of *Philosophy, Politics, and Society*, political philosophy was dead. Whether due to the influence of logical positivism and then ordinary language philosophy within analytically oriented departments or the dominance of utilitarianism within political thought, prior to Rawls there had not been an overarching and systematic treatment of political theory in the Anglophone world since the days of Mill and T. H. Green, if not before. Normative argument had come to seem quaint and outmoded until Rawls sought to renew the theory of the social contract. It is worthy of note that Walzer's *Obligations*, which also posits itself as a social contract argument, was published the year before Rawls's book, but Rawls had been publishing earlier versions of his theory in journal articles since the late 1950s and had circulated a manuscript version of the book to his friends and colleagues in the late 1960s.

As is well known and has been noted on several occasions in this text, Walzer was never entirely a convert to the Rawlsian school of political theory. He himself noted in *Spheres of Justice* that, where Rawls borrowed from disciplines such as economics and psychology, he himself used history and anthropology much more frequently. In the 1970s, in particular, it might be said that literature is also a frequent source of inspiration for Walzer. References to Shakespearean plays – particularly *Hamlet*,²⁰³ *Richard II* and *Henry V*²⁰⁴ – abound in *Just and Unjust Wars*, *Regicide and Revolution*, *Radical Principles* and “Political Action,” while the last of these texts draws its title from Sartre's *Dirty Hands* and also draws heavily on Camus's *The Just Assassins*.²⁰⁵ The introduction to *Radical Principles* quotes repeatedly from Bertold Brecht's *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*²⁰⁶ and concludes by reproducing a Walt Whitman poem about what a “great city” would be like.²⁰⁷

Nonetheless, political philosophy of the type practiced by Rawls was a major influence on Walzer in the 1970s. He notes as much in the acknowledgements to *Just and Unjust Wars*, saying that he went “to school” with the members of the Society for Ethical and Legal Philosophy in the decade leading up to publication of the book²⁰⁸ and thanking Judith Jarvis Thompson and Robert Nozick in particular. Moreover, at key points in *Just and Unjust Wars*, Walzer is indebted to Joel Feinberg's *Doing and Deserving*²⁰⁹ for its argument that punishment serves an expressive function as an instrument of public condemnation,²¹⁰ and its account of the responsibilities of democratic citizens for the actions of their leaders. In “Political Action,” Walzer draws frequently from such analytic-style thinkers as Thomas Nagel, R. M. Hare, Bernard Williams, and Nozick, as well as their precursors such as J. L. Austin and David Ross. The article was first presented at the Conference for the Study of Political Thought in New York in 1971 and Charles Taylor commented on it then.²¹¹ Although Walzer remained influenced by

an approach to political thought that stressed the importance of history, he was in the 1970s also immersed in debates of an altogether more abstract nature whether willingly or not.

I do not want to overstate this point. It is worth noting that the anti-Vietnam movement remained prominent in the US throughout the early 1970s, and that Walzer identified with it closely. Indeed, he postponed the writing of *Spheres of Justice*, after he had elaborated some of its theory in the Capitalism and Socialism class that he taught with Nozick, because during his years of involvement in the anti-Vietnam movement, he had “promised [himself] that one day [he] would try to set out the moral argument about war in a quiet and reflective way.”²¹² In addition, the traditions of thought demarcated in the previous chapter all remained influential throughout the 1970s. *Regicide and Revolution* is dedicated to Samuel Beer (as well as to Frank E. Manuel), and *Radical Principles* is “FOR Irving Howe, Lewis Coser, Stanley Plastrik, Manny Geltman, and all my comrades on *Dissent*.”²¹³ Beer and Howe, and the traditions of historicized idealism and radical democracy that they symbolized for Walzer, remained in tension with the theorizing of the Society for Ethical and Legal Philosophy throughout the 1970s and beyond.

Finally, although consideration of Walzer’s Judaism will be undertaken in detail in later chapters, it is worth pondering its influence on *Just and Unjust Wars*. The dedication to that book is, unlike either *Radical Principles* or *Regicide and Revolution*, not to people of Walzer’s acquaintance, but to those killed in the Holocaust and is drawn from an inscription at the *Yad Va-shem* Memorial in Jerusalem.²¹⁴ The early parts of the book were drafted in the summer of 1974 while Walzer was in Jerusalem on a fellowship from the Jerusalem Foundation²¹⁵ and many of the historical illustrations used in the book are of examples from the history of Israel or of matters related in some way to Diaspora Jewry.²¹⁶

III

In this section, I provided an account of the central arguments of each of Walzer’s major works written in the 1970s.²¹⁷ In the case of *Radical Principles*, most of the arguments repeat positions Walzer had earlier staked out in journal articles. Minor works are not summarized here but taken up where they are of import to the lengthier or more noteworthy texts.

Just and Unjust Wars

I will start with *Just and Unjust Wars*, because although it postdates both *Regicide and Revolution* and “Political Action,” it is clearly Walzer’s major work of the period. Indeed, Brian Orend argues that it is Walzer’s most significant work to date and that the theory offered in it is significantly richer than anything Walzer has to say in either his methodological account of the nature of political theory or his argument concerning distributive justice.²¹⁸ For that reason, four of the seven chapters of *Michael Walzer on War and Justice* are devoted to analysis of the arguments put forward in *Just and Unjust Wars*. Note that discussion of the introductions to the later editions of *Just and Unjust Wars* will occur in the chapters concerned with the time periods in which they were written.

Just and Unjust Wars is divided into five parts, each of which deals with a different aspect of just war theory, and also includes an afterword in which Walzer briefly considers the viability of Gandhian non-violence as an alternative to defensive wars. The first part of the book provides an argument as to why it makes sense to think of war as an activity governed by moral principles, and claims, in contradistinction to “realism,” that there is a “*moral reality of war*”

akin to the strategic reality and fixed by “the opinions of mankind.”²¹⁹ Although it is true, Walzer says, that people will have different opinions about morality, this does not mean that “all opinions are equal” or that “moral authority” does not exist. Rather it arises out of “the capacity to evoke commonly accepted principles in persuasive ways and to apply them to particular cases.”²²⁰ This argument is an important statement about the nature of moral reasoning in Walzer’s meta-ethic and will be discussed in detail below and in subsequent chapters. Part two of the book is concerned with *jus ad bellum*, or the question of when it is just to go to war. Walzer’s contention is that only defensive wars are legitimate, although he does accept the legitimacy of pre-emptive strikes and, in exceptional circumstances, of secessionist or humanitarian interventions. In part three, Walzer discusses the “war convention,” the set of rules by which wars must be fought, regardless of the justice of their cause. In this part, Walzer is at pains to affirm the distinction between *jus ad bellum* and the laws of war, or *jus in bello* as well as to insist on the importance of noncombatant immunity and respect for human rights. Part four turns to ethical dilemmas in the fighting of war, in particular the tension between winning the war and respecting the war convention, which is most apposite in the case of the “supreme emergency.” It also considers the questions of neutrality and of nuclear deterrence. Finally, part five discusses the allocation of responsibility for war crimes.

We can gain a clear insight into the purpose of *Just and Unjust Wars* by considering what Walzer takes to be his aims for the book in the preface. The first point of note is that he first thought about the ethics of war in connection with US involvement in Vietnam and as an activist.²²¹ According to Walzer, moral and political philosophy is of only “indirect” help to activists, especially during war when crises are too urgent to allow time for philosophical reflection. Yet philosophy is not of no help whatsoever, for the American anti-war movement benefited greatly from the availability of a “moral doctrine... a connected set of names and concepts that we all knew – and that everyone else knew.”²²² This doctrine was of course that of the just war and it was available to people who had never thought about the meaning of its component parts hitherto but who knew what “aggression and neutrality, the rights of prisoners and civilians, atrocities and war crimes” were.²²³ Realizing that the concepts were often used carelessly – partly because of the pressure of the moment but more importantly because of the attitude of analytic philosophy towards normative ethics – Walzer promised himself that, once the war was over he would “try to set out the moral argument about war in a quiet and reflective way.”²²⁴ *Just and Unjust Wars* was, then, motivated originally by practical political concerns and not by abstract theoretical ones. This is no surprise for the reader of Walzer, who was however also motivated to defend the process of theorizing in normative terms about political events.²²⁵

Walzer’s concerns are, then, motivated by actual events but extend to a defense of a particular approach to the study of politics. In the preface, he also gives an account of that method. First, although the language that he uses is similar to that of international law, his purpose is different from that of lawyers. He seeks to explain how citizens argue about war and explain “the present structure of the moral world.”²²⁶ Argument, as he often points out, presupposes the possibility of understanding, because otherwise we could neither justify our behavior nor criticize that of other people. So, Walzer believes that the concepts he seeks to explicate can when examined reveal “a comprehensive view of war as a human activity and a more or less systemic moral doctrine, which sometimes, but not always, overlaps with established legal doctrine.”²²⁷ *Just and Unjust Wars* sets out its stall, as I noted at the start of the chapter, to make just war theory a topic of renewed interest to political theorists. It does so by referring back to the “religious tradition within which Western politics and morality were first

given shape” but not by writing a history of that tradition. In fact, citations are more frequently from contemporary figures, be they philosophers, statesmen, or soldiers.²²⁸

Walzer makes the disclaimer that he will not “expound morality from the ground up” because doing so would probably be an endless task and because he is uncertain about the foundations of morality.²²⁹ Those uncertainties should not, according to Walzer, prevent moral debate because while it goes on “we are living in the superstructure” and he can “offer some guidance: a tour of the rooms, so to speak.”²³⁰ As a book of “practical morality,” *Just and Unjust Wars* might be closely related to foundational questions in ethics, “but it does not require a direct engagement with those questions. Indeed, philosophers who seek such an engagement often miss the immediacies of political and moral controversy and provide little help to men and women faced with hard choices.”²³¹ Moral theorists should not be put off by this fact, as the analysis of moral arguments and discussion of their coherence is an important tool by which to demonstrate deep commitments and exposing hypocrisy.²³² Walzer remains committed to the view that it is possible to arrange the system of moral concepts in more and less persuasive ways and that the most persuasive way to talk about the ethics of war is as an effort “to recognize and respect the rights of individual and associated men and women.”²³³ Although utilitarian concerns may be of value in some cases, just war theory must constrain those concerns by respect for rights, for the most part. This is true even in cases of “military necessity”.²³⁴

The final point of note in the preface is another comment on the nature of “practical morality.” It is, Walzer says, “casuistic in character.” In other words, Walzer will work his argument through consideration of particular cases: hence, *Just and Unjust Wars* is “a moral argument with historical illustrations.” The cases are only sketched out as exemplars of general cases and Walzer says that the reader “upset by my failures [to be accurate historically] might usefully treat the cases as if they were hypothetical. . . though it is important to my own sense of my enterprise that I am reporting on experiences that men and women have really had.”²³⁵ Walzer is plainly making a nod to his friends in the Society for Ethical and Legal Philosophy, most of whom would have worked through almost the entirety of a book about the ethics of war by the use of hypothetical examples, but it also suggests that Walzer does not see the use of such hypotheses as entirely illegitimate.

The preface, then, is not only a key indicator of Walzer’s ambitions for *Just and Unjust Wars*, but an important statement about his notion of moral and political theory, as it was to be developed in later works. As in *Spheres of Justice*, he seeks to portray himself as not being a foundationalist thinker, but he insists nonetheless that normative theorizing remains a viable approach to the subject. This is because we live in a world in which important values and modes of argument are shared. Furthermore, he foreshadows the argument of *Spheres of Justice* that political theory should use the tools of history rather than of psychology or economics, and the argument of *Interpretation and Social Criticism* that it should seek to interpret ethical principles and not to invent or to discover them. As *Just and Unjust Wars* is frequently seen as being in tension with those two later works – because it is a rights-based theory and Walzer elsewhere seems not to believe in the notion of human rights – these are important indicators about the coherence of his political thought, a subject to which I return later.

As I said above, Part One of *Just and Unjust Wars* contains Walzer’s argument in defense of just war theory as a meaningful set of restrictions on what can be done by combatants and by their commanders. In chapter 1, he combats the realist argument that “in time of war the law is silent,”²³⁶ which is best exemplified by the account given in Thucydides of the Athenian generals’ behavior during the Melian Dialogue. By insisting that it is necessary for Athens to

expand its empire if it can and that it is necessary for the Melians to submit to a greater power, Thucydides sets out the central realist case: that war may be “hellish” but the actions of its participants cannot be criticized.²³⁷ Walzer’s critique of the realist position derives its force from his discussion of the nature of “necessity.” As he points out, saying that something is necessary may mean that it is “indispensable” or that it is “inevitable.” By ignoring the debate in Athens about which policy to adopt, Thucydides enables himself to blur this distinction.²³⁸ It is by insisting on this distinction that Walzer is able to put the case for war being a realm about which ethics has something to say. It enables him to argue that military outrages cannot strictly speaking be necessary as human agents always have choices, including the choices of which ends they take to be indispensable. Their actions are, therefore, never inevitable. Once he has established that military actions are things that are chosen; Walzer can make his argument that the language of morality operates on similar lines to that of military strategy.²³⁹

Finally, Walzer argues that just war theory can survive the relativist claim that morality varies from community to community because, “notions about right conduct are remarkably persistent.”²⁴⁰ This is an interesting argument for the author of a work in which justice is said to be relative to social meanings and in which the caste system is said to be just provided that it is in accordance with the shared understandings of the community to which it applies. That is why Walzer has to provide historical examples that demonstrate the continuity over time of moral principles in time of war – in this case the consideration by various chronicles over a period of centuries of the decision of Henry V to slay captured French prisoners at the battle of Agincourt in 1415.²⁴¹ As we have not yet considered *Spheres of Justice* in any detail, I will leave off consideration of whether this section of *Just and Unjust Wars* is consistent with the relativist argument of *Spheres*, except to point out that Walzer accepts that it is the fact of shared judgments that makes the ethics of war possible. He admits that there may be “other worlds to whose inhabitants the arguments I am going to make would seem incomprehensible and bizarre.”²⁴² The implication seems to be that to such people, the ethics of war indeed has no place and war may be fought by whatever means necessary. Arguably, then, just war theory relies on shared understandings as much as does distributive justice, and Walzer’s difference of emphasis is explained by the greater continuity over time and between communities on matters of killing than on matters of social provision. We will, however, have to return to this point.

There are two other chapters in part 1, the aim of which is to explain what it means to say that war is a crime – and thus to justify the principles of *jus ad bellum* – and the other of which to explain why there are rules of war and to defend the notion of *jus in bello*. As the chapters are, on Walzer’s admission, introductions to parts 2 and 3 of *Just and Unjust Wars*, in which each argument is set out in greater detail, I will not discuss the chapters individually.²⁴³

The “Theory of Aggression,” consideration of which takes up the four chapters of part 2 of *Just and Unjust Wars*, was to prove surprisingly controversial. Critics of Walzer argued that his insistence on non-intervention made his theory both conservative and statist and vitiated his claim to have developed a rights-based theory of just war. This prompted his response – “The Moral Standing of States” – which I consider below. Yet this seems to have been unanticipated by Walzer, who started his consideration of *jus ad bellum* with the bold claim that, “Aggression is the name we give to the crime of war... Aggression is remarkable because it is the **only** crime that states can commit against other states: everything else is, as it were, a misdemeanor.”²⁴⁴ As implied by this principle, Walzer maintains that states are always permitted to defend themselves regardless of how serious the infringement of the sovereignty or territory is. Political

communities have two fundamental rights “that are worth dying for” – territorial integrity and political sovereignty.²⁴⁵

So, it is understandable that critics would think that Walzer’s theory is a communitarian one. He is at pains to insist in *Just and Unjust Wars* – much more so than in *Spheres* – that the rights of states derive from those of individuals. The reason that states may defend themselves is that an attack on the state is an attack on the members and threatens not only their lives but also their right to collective self-determination. Hence in developing the argument against aggression, Walzer reiterates the claim that, “Individual rights (to life and liberty) underlie the most important judgments that we make about war.”²⁴⁶ As in *Obligations*, Walzer takes the state to be based on a contract – or, rather, on the metaphor of a contract – and its purpose to be the defense of individual rights, including those that are shared in the state as a community.

This is the basis of what Walzer refers to as the “legalist paradigm,” under which the crimes of war are to be understood by virtue of a “domestic analogy” with equivalent crimes that might be committed in a civil state.²⁴⁷ The paradigm makes sense, according to Walzer, even though international society is a far less complete legal structure than is even the weakest of states. What it implies is that aggression is a threat to the structure of international society as a whole because of the absence of a police force to prevent crimes; so the “rights of the member states must be vindicated, for it is only by virtue of those rights that there is a society at all. If they cannot be upheld (at least sometimes), international society collapses into a state of war or...a universal tyranny.”²⁴⁸

Walzer draws two conclusions from the legalist paradigm: one that resistance to aggression is always justified, even if states choose not to resist, because self-defense is a defense of the whole community; and one that in any war there is always at least one state that can be held responsible. For Walzer, it is impossible for both sides to a war to have justice on their side, although it is possible for both sides to be unjust.²⁴⁹ He also states six propositions that sum up the theory of aggression as drawn up using the legalist paradigm: 1) “*There exists an international society of independent states*”; 2) “*This international society has a law that establishes the rights of its members – above all, the rights of territorial integrity and political sovereignty*”; 3) “*Any use of force or imminent threat of force by one state against the political sovereignty or territorial integrity of another constitutes aggression and is a criminal act*”; 4) “*Aggression justifies two kinds of violent response: a war of self-defense by the victim and a war of law enforcement by the victim and any other member of international society*”; 5) “*Nothing but aggression can justify war*”; 6) “*Once the aggressor state has been militarily repulsed, it can also be punished.*”²⁵⁰ This is the theory of *jus ad bellum* as propagated by Walzer, although there are exceptions in the cases of pre-emption, secession or national liberation, counter-intervention and, in extreme cases, humanitarian intervention.²⁵¹²⁵²

In discussing these exceptions, Walzer insists that “preventive” war is not one of them. This is because such a war involves a response to a threat that is not imminent and is, therefore, one freely chosen by the “defender” based on their assessment of the danger. For a pre-emptive strike to be just, the state that launches it must face a serious risk to their territorial integrity or political sovereignty if they fail to launch the strike.²⁵³ For this reason, Walzer endorses Abba Eban’s suggestion that the destruction of an independent state be named the crime of “policide” and made an offense against international law.²⁵⁴ The threat must however be more than just a provocation and it must be, in a sense, imminent, even though the opposing state need not actually be intending to launch a strike. For this reason, Walzer says that the Israeli pre-emptive strike that launched the 1967 Six-Day War was justified because Israel faced a real danger if it

did not attack and because Egypt intended to place it in that danger.²⁵⁵ He makes this claim in spite of the fact that Egypt may not have been intending to “begin the war,” and does so because war fever had gripped Egypt and because by deploying forces on the Israeli border, Egypt posed a serious threat to Israel. Preventive strikes do not respond to such clear existential threats and are therefore forbidden.²⁵⁶ They are responses to a sense of fear, but Walzer insists that war may justly be launched only when a state is threatened and not just because it feels afraid.

Walzer uses the same justification for interventions in the case of struggles of national liberation or succession: namely, that in each case a “distinct community” is struggling for its independence against a power that is essentially foreign to it even if it is de facto in control over it.²⁵⁷ The argument is essentially the same as that used to justify pre-emption, namely that the theory of aggression was grounded, as we saw, on a desire to maintain a pluralist world order and that, in these cases, the spirit of the theory is best honored in the breach, as national liberation promotes pluralism even if it does not maintain it. It is for the same reason that Walzer insists on the norm of non-intervention. I discuss this in detail below when considering “The Moral Standing of States.” In essence, Walzer’s argument is, following Mill, not only that self-determination is a political right but also that self-help is the only way in which a community can achieve independence: “The members of a political community must seek their own freedom... They cannot be set free... by any external force.”²⁵⁸ Interventions, however well motivated, cannot succeed in achieving the goal of helping the state to maintain or achieve freedom, just as an individual cannot be forced to be free. The right to self-determination is the right of a people “to become free by their own efforts” and nonintervention is the means by which their attempt to achieve freedom is respected.²⁵⁹

It is the insistence that the aim of intervention must be communal freedom that leads Walzer to his curious position on counter-intervention. This is when a state intervenes in a civil war to help one side because another state has intervened to help the other side. Once a state intervenes, other states are justified in doing so; in fact, “it may seem shameful not to repeat the violation.”²⁶⁰ It would seem shameful because the initial intervention is a violation of the community’s right to sort out its difficulties for itself. Thus, Walzer argues that the counter-intervention must serve to balance out the forces of the other intervening power. The purpose of counter-intervention is not to win the war but to ensure that the balance of domestic forces determines the outcome of the war.²⁶¹

The ideal of self-determination is tested to the utmost in the case of humanitarian disasters. For this reason, Walzer is willing to countenance humanitarian intervention in the case of enslavement or massacre. As he accepts, the appeal to self-determination “has to do with the freedom of the community taken as a whole; it has no force when what is at stake is the bare survival or the minimal liberty of (some substantial number of) its members.”²⁶² Self-determination is so important because it is one of the most basic and important of human rights; it can therefore be overridden when even more basic rights, which are prerequisites of self-determination, are at stake. However, Walzer worries about the possibility of mixed motives on the part of intervening forces and, as a result, says that humanitarian intervention should be justified “when it is a response (with reasonable expectations of success) to acts ‘that shock the moral conscience of mankind’” but not otherwise.²⁶³ Except in the most extreme of cases, self-determination must be respected even if it means violations of some human rights.

Walzer concludes part II by consideration of occasions in which the importance of winning a cause may lead us to countenance wars that go beyond the merely defensive. In particular, he discusses the Allied policy of demanding unconditional surrender from Germany

and Japan during World War II. On Walzer's account, such a demand is usually unacceptable, because although aggressive states may be punished for breaching the peace, the demands violates the punished state's right to choose its own regime. A just war is not, Walzer insists, a crusade and hence care must be taken when demanding unconditional surrender.²⁶⁴ In exceptional cases, it may be demanded because of the threat posed by the nature of the regime in question.

Thus Walzer argues that the Allied policy was justified with regard to Germany but not in the case of Japan. The Nazi regime was so "evil" that it "placed [itself] outside the (moral) world of bargaining and accommodation." As a result, the Allies were justified in refusing to negotiate with Nazi leaders and in insisting that they would recognize no German government until they had themselves occupied Germany and set up the successor regime.²⁶⁵ Had the Nazi regime survived in any form it would have continued to threaten the stability of the international order and it thus forfeited the German government's right to self-determination – but not that of the German people.²⁶⁶ Although unconditional surrender rendered the German people's "political liberty temporarily forfeit," this was a result of their failure to overthrow the Nazis themselves and they can thus be seen as being in "political tutelage" so long as the punishment was "limited and temporary."²⁶⁷ Beyond that, any punishment would have violated Germany's right to self-determination.²⁶⁸

Walzer concludes that a fifth revision of the legalist paradigm is necessary to account for the difference between domestic punishment and that in international politics. Except in cases such as that of Nazism, just wars must be "conservative in character" and cannot seek to "stamp out illegal violence" – as domestic punishment does – but simply to "cope with particular violent acts."²⁶⁹ Whereas the other four revisions of the paradigm encourage greater scope for ignoring the sovereignty of states than the legalist paradigm would suggest, this fifth one suggests increased scope. The difference is that in the other cases the legalist paradigm fails to recognize either particular threats to states that individuals do not face, or the existence of communities not recognized by international law, whereas here the domestic theory of punishment is too broad in scope to be applied internationally.

I now turn to part 3 of *Just and Unjust Wars*, which deals with *jus in bello* or what Walzer refers to as the war convention. The most important of these principles are that non-combatants be immune from military attack and that only proportionate force be used. Walzer's first task, however, is to demonstrate that the claim that any measures may be used in a just war is false. The central reason for this is that "the moral status of individual soldiers on both sides is very much the same: they are led to fight by their loyalty to their own states and by their lawful obedience. They are most likely to believe that their wars are just."²⁷⁰

Dispensing with the domestic analogy on the grounds that soldiers are not normally regarded as criminals in the way that domestic villains are, Walzer instead considers Sidgwick's argument that any actions that are useful and proportionate are justified.²⁷¹ Although he recognizes that Sidgwick's rule seeks "to impose an economy of force," he deems them insufficient and argues that they fail to "explain the most critical of the judgments we make of soldiers and their generals."²⁷² Warriors are not expected simply to calculate the utility of their actions but to adhere to a set of more or less rigid rules that they will not violate, most notably non-combatant rights not to be attacked, raped, pillaged and so on.²⁷³ Walzer rejects the alternative view that the best fought war is the one that brings war to the swiftest possible conclusions because such a war would not hold open the possibility of a genuine future peace and "the resumption of pre-war activities."²⁷⁴ War fought without restraint will not make future

war less likely and will probably lead to future resentments and desire for revenge. Although it might be the case that any generally accepted restrictions would obviate this threat, Walzer contends that the best way to do so is to respect the rights of non-combatants and of non-engaged soldiers. As Walzer puts it, a “legitimate act of war is one that does not violate the rights of the people against whom it is directed...no one can be forced to fight or to risk his life, no one can be threatened with war or warred against, unless through some act of his own he has surrendered or lost his rights.”²⁷⁵ At this point, the argument of *Just and Unjust Wars* overlaps with that of *Obligations*, in which a person is responsible only for those commitments to which she has explicitly consented. We can only be forced to fight if we have actively consented to do so.

In practice, however, non-combatant immunity is a tricky principle to defend because soldiers may well have been conscripted. Recognizing this, Walzer sets out to argue as to why it is that the “first principle of the war convention is that, once war has begun, soldiers are subject to attack at any time (unless they are wounded or captured).”²⁷⁶ Acknowledging that this not only means targeting people who have not chosen to fight but is also a piece of “class legislation,”²⁷⁷ Walzer argues nonetheless that those who fight forfeit their right to life. To advance this point, Walzer cites various instances of soldiers who were unwilling to kill other soldiers because the potential victims were defenseless because they were either unarmed or naked or smoking or asleep etc.²⁷⁸ Killing such soldiers is not against the laws of war, but Walzer argues that the refusal to kill those soldiers demonstrates why the war convention distinguishes between combatants and non-combatants. He says,

what does it mean to say that someone has a right to life? To say that is to recognize a fellow creature, who is not threatening me, whose activities have the savor of peace and camaraderie, whose person is as valuable as my own. An enemy has to be described differently, and though the stereotypes through which he is seen are often grotesque, they have a certain truth. He alienates himself from me when he tries to kill me, and from our common humanity. But the alienation is temporary, the humanity imminent. It is restored, as it were, by the prosaic acts that break down the stereotypes in each of the...stories [of naked or otherwise inattentive soldiers].

The case might be different if we imagine this man to be a wholehearted soldier.²⁷⁹

Then such a man would still be making war upon me, which the soldiers who are not concentrating on fighting but engaging in ordinary actions do not appear to be doing. Thus, combatants are legitimate targets in ways that non-combatants are not because they threaten their enemies, even if unwillingly.

Walzer goes on to argue that civilians may not be targeted even in cases of “military necessity,” partly because of his commitment to the view that the class of necessary actions is much smaller than commonly supposed, but largely because “reason of war” can “only justify the killing of people we already have reason to think are liable to be killed.”²⁸⁰ Likewise, Walzer says that the only workers who can be justly attacked are those who supply soldiers with military needs and not with those who “make what [soldiers] need to live...When it is militarily necessary, workers in a tank factory can be attacked and killed, but not workers in a food processing plant. The former are assimilated to the class of soldiers...when they are actually

engaged in activities threatening and harmful to their enemies.”²⁸¹ The logic, again, is that only threatening persons may be targeted.

Walzer is not such an absolute defender of civilian immunity as to suggest that warring armies must make sure never to kill civilians. Rather, they must simply avoid targeting them. He employs the notion of “double effect” to argue that military targets may be attacked when non-combatants will be hurt in the process, although he insists that soldiers must try not to harm civilians.²⁸² Double effect allows the performance of acts with “evil consequences” so as to reconcile the law forbidding attacks on non-combatants with the “legitimate conduct of military activity.”²⁸³ This should not be taken to allow military terrorism, which Walzer later attacks strongly, because the harming of civilians must be an unwanted by-effect of the action even if it is foreseen. As a result, Walzer insists strongly that the “evil effect” should be reduced as far as possible. Soldiers must display “some sign of a positive commitment to save civilian lives...if saving civilian lives means risking soldier’s lives, the risk must be accepted.”²⁸⁴ Walzer accepts that there are limits to the risks that must be undergone but does not know exactly where those limits should be.

In the remaining chapters of part 3, Walzer applies the principle of non-combatant immunity to various different types of warfare in which civilians are bound to be involved. He argues first that, in the case of sieges, cities that are crucial military objectives may be attacked even though that means that intentional civilians deaths will occur.²⁸⁵ However, he rejects the view that only the commander of the besieged people is responsible for the inhabitants of the city and argues that the inhabitants of a besieged city must be allowed by the enemy to depart from the city. If they stay, they are legitimate military targets.²⁸⁶ Walzer insists on this principle even though it will mean that the besiegers are handicapped in their fight because the defenders will have a larger food supply per capita. As he points out, the rules of war always impose restrictions that make the battle more difficult.²⁸⁷

In the case of guerrilla war, non-combatant immunity is difficult to achieve because guerrillas seek to blend in with civilians and may be difficult to distinguish from them.²⁸⁸ In this sense, guerrillas deliberately subvert the war convention and “challenge the most fundamental principles of the rulers of war.”²⁸⁹ They do not necessarily attack civilians themselves but they make it difficult for their enemies not to do so. The creed of guerrillas is that of the “people’s war” or the “levee en masse,” and they effectively challenge the enemy to confront a “whole people mobilized for war.” Thus, guerrillas try to “place the onus of indiscriminate warfare on the opposing army. The guerrillas themselves have to discriminate.”²⁹⁰ This is, according to Walzer, the crucial factor in determining the rights of guerrillas. If the guerrillas do indeed have the support of the mass of the people, then they acquire war rights, whereas guerrillas without mass popular support “may rightly [be treated] when captured as ‘bandits’ or criminals. But any significant degree of popular support entitles the guerrillas to the benevolent quarantine customarily offered prisoners of war.”²⁹¹ This is because the former instance implies that the guerrilla war really is a “levee en masse,” whereas in the latter case the guerrillas do not represent a potentially independent political community striving for freedom.²⁹²

The more difficult question relates to the rights of civilians in a guerrilla war. It is precisely because civilians have rights that are likely to be respected that guerrillas hide among them. Walzer insists that the scruples of anti-guerrilla forces have both a moral and a strategic purpose. It is “in the interest of the anti-guerrilla forces to insist upon the soldier/civilian distinction...what is necessary is to isolate the guerrillas from the civilian population.”²⁹³ If this cannot be achieved, then in Walzer’s view the anti-guerrilla war cannot possibly be won and

should not be fought because the guerrillas have the support of the people and a war against the people is a war against the right to self-determination and an aggressive war.²⁹⁴ Even if ultimately be achieved, civilians retain their rights in the interim. This is of course the occasion for Walzer to criticize the US conduct of its war in Vietnam, which was one of the key things that he wished to do in writing the book.²⁹⁵ In Walzer's view, the Vietnam War is an instance in which the principles of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*, although logically independent of each other, coincide, because such a war,

cannot be won, and it should not be won. It cannot be won, because the only available strategy involves a war against civilians; and it should not be won, because the degree of civilian support that rules out alternative strategies also makes the guerrillas the legitimate rulers of the country. The struggle against them is an unjust struggle as well as one that can only be carried on unjustly. Fought by foreigners, it is a war of aggression; if by a local regime alone, it is an act of tyranny. The position of the anti-guerrilla forces has become doubly untenable.²⁹⁶

It is precisely because the US was waging what was essentially an aggressive, imperial war against an entire country that it could not fight the war in accordance with the rules of war.

The case of terrorism is different. Here Walzer considers governments and revolutionaries²⁹⁷ who seek to avoid engaging with the army of their opponents by terrorizing civilians. In Walzer's view, such a strategy is rightly seen as civilian and not as military, it "represents the continuation of war by political means."²⁹⁸ He argues that such a strategy is illegitimate because it ignores the immunity of non-combatants, but that action in accordance with a "revolutionary 'code of honor'" – aiming at assassination rather than "random murder" – is a more difficult question.²⁹⁹ Political killing is a risky business, as those who engage in it will not receive the quarantine accorded to prisoners of war. Nonetheless, there is a sense in which it is more legitimate than attacks on soldiers because state officials are more likely to have freely chosen the position that puts them in danger. However, the "threatening character of the soldier's activities is a matter of fact; the unjust or oppressive character of the official's activities is a matter of political judgment. For this reason, the political code has never attained to the same status as the war convention." Walzer insists, in spite of this, that assassins should get a "kind of moral respect" that terrorists do not, because their actions are limited.³⁰⁰

Indiscriminate terror, on the other hand, is something that Walzer cannot condone because it is closely linked with the demand for unconditional surrender.³⁰¹ Even those terrorists who make a parallel claim to that of military necessity – that they fight for an oppressed people who can succeed only through the use of terror – are unjustified.³⁰² This is because, even when armed struggle is indeed the only way to achieve freedom, "if dignity and self-respect are to be the outcomes of that struggle, it cannot consist of terrorist attacks upon children."³⁰³ It may be that oppression encourages such attacks but only through "restraint and self-control" can oppression be overcome: "soldiers [and revolutionaries] most clearly assert their freedom when they obey the moral law."³⁰⁴ Here the argument echoes the earlier claim that indiscriminate war is to be opposed because it is incompatible with a secure peace thereafter. Terrorist attacks might persuade a colonizing power to abandon its colony, but they will not help the community to prepare itself to be capable of exercising political independence.

The final type of scenario in which non-combatant immunity becomes a difficult issue is that of reprisals. Reprisals are often justified on the grounds that they deter the parties to the war from fighting with impunity.³⁰⁵ However, they are controversial morally because they are the type of action that is used as a stick with which to beat the theory of utilitarianism. As is well known, a frequent criticism of that theory is that “its calculations would under certain circumstances require the authorities to ‘punish’ an innocent person.”³⁰⁶ This is exactly what a reprisal entails: one party to a war executes, say, 80 prisoners of war, and so the other one does exactly the same.³⁰⁷ Yet those prisoners of war have done nothing to merit the punishment. If the reprisal is justified, it is an instance of utilitarian calculations being allowed to violate the rights of the innocent. Although Walzer sees some force in the claim that reprisals occur precisely because there is a war convention that those carrying out the reprisals wish to be upheld,³⁰⁸ he ultimately concludes that **all** reprisals that target the innocent must be condemned.³⁰⁹ Laws of war cannot be violated for the sake of law enforcement. However, Walzer does condone reprisals that would violate minor rules of war, such as the ban on the use of poison gas, which Winston Churchill warned the German government would be a matter that would provoke a reprisal. In this instance, such a ban is not morally required because soldiers are legitimate targets.³¹⁰ The laws of war may be bent to defend a state against threats but not against innocent bystanders.

So, the exceptions to the principle of non-aggression are the cases of pre-emption, secession/anti-colonialism, counter-intervention and humanitarian intervention in catastrophic cases, and punishment is another distinction between *jus ad bellum* and the legalist paradigm. Non-combatant immunity is the overriding principle of *jus in bello*, and actions with a double effect must be undertaken with care. Non-combatant immunity structures the actions that are legitimate in the cases of sieges, guerrilla war, terrorist campaigns, and reprisals, generally severely limiting such actions if not making them illegitimate altogether. What though of the cases in which obeying the laws of war will lead to military defeat? This is the question that Walzer addresses in part four of *Just and Unjust Wars*. His most significant theoretical departure is the discussion of the “supreme emergency,” in which Walzer allows the laws of war to be “overridden,” but not forgotten, if national survival is at stake. Before he gets there, he offers an overview of different approaches to dilemmas in the application of the laws of war and a discussion of the right to neutrality.³¹¹

The most significant alternative to the “supreme emergency” argument is the “sliding scale” approach. On this view, the laws of war apply in increasing levels of strictness depending on the justice of the cause being fought for. On this approach, some rules, “are always inviolable,” but the “greater the justice of my cause, the more rules I can violate.”³¹² Walzer will ultimately wish to reject this approach to the laws of war, but he takes it seriously because it both recognizes the rights of individuals and allows those resisting aggression to take some liberties that will aid them to achieve victory.³¹³ The sliding-scale argument is a means of addressing the tension between *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*: it accepts that conflict may arise between the (moral) need to win the war and the moral requirement to fight it well. However, in its extreme form, it reverts to the “war is hell” view in which the only issue of note is *jus ad bellum* and anything may be done in fighting a just war.³¹⁴ This is the kernel of Walzer’s objection to the approach, which is more completely expressed in the idea that a sliding scale makes it easier for wartime leaders to convince themselves that they are “forced” to violate the war convention. In other words, the sliding-scale approach views rights as something that can be “eroded or undercut,” whereas Walzer believes that they can only be overridden and that the person who overrides them must “accept the moral consequences and the burden of guilt” for doing so.³¹⁵

Moreover, the notion of the supreme emergency implies that rights can be overridden only in the case of a genuine necessity. Nonetheless, Walzer takes the sliding scale seriously as an alternative to his own view.³¹⁶

Neutrality seems as though it is a topic of concern to non-combatant immunity rather than to dilemmas of war. Neutral parties are, after all, non-combatants par excellence. However, Walzer considers the issue later on because he takes it to be an exemplar of the question of when it is legitimate to override the laws of war.³¹⁷ On his view, it is important to distinguish between the right to be neutral and the rights of neutral parties.³¹⁸ The reason why the question of neutrality is so closely tied in with the question of overriding the laws of war is that, in the case in which an aggressor threatens the general peace, the right to be neutral comes to be seen as tenuous.³¹⁹ Moreover, neutral parties are seen as being somehow unethical, because their domestic counterpart – the person who avoids getting involved in a street fight – would be seen as morally suspect.³²⁰ However, Walzer insists on the state's right to be neutral, partly because states, unlike citizens, cannot rely on police aid if they get involved, but also because the risks involved in war are not akin to those involved in a domestic fight. States that wage war necessarily “condemn an indefinite number of its citizens to certain death.”³²¹ The right to neutral is best seen as a way in which to limit the spread of war. The only case in which neutrality is morally unjustifiable, says Walzer, is when the aggressor poses a general threat: “while a neutral state has or may have a right to let others die in quarrels of their own, it cannot let them die on its behalf.”³²² In a sense, the limits on neutrality occur in cases that touch all, and rely on the principle that Walzer defends in *Radical Principles*, that what touches all must be decided by all.³²³

This brings us to Walzer's consideration of the supreme emergency. The phrase, borrowed from Churchill's description of the situation faced by Britain in 1939/40,³²⁴ is intended to denote a situation in which a state is faced by a danger that is both imminent and potentially catastrophic. Only if both criteria apply can a situation be called a supreme emergency.³²⁵ In such a situation, Walzer believes that the phrase “military necessity” is, finally, appropriate. To illustrate his point, Walzer considers the argument of Stanley Baldwin, a former British Prime Minister to the effect that anyone facing imminent death but in possession of a weapon will use that weapon to save himself.

The point of the analogy is not literal, according to Walzer; rather, the claim is that “people will necessarily (inevitably) adopt extreme measures if such measures are necessary (essential) either to escape death or to avoid military defeat.”³²⁶ Walzer wants to say that this argument is flawed because some military defeats entail only relatively minor losses, such as the demand that the state pays reparations to its victor, and that in such a case the state is morally obliged to accept defeat. The problem with Baldwin's example is that it relates to a case in which defeat is imminent but would not cause a catastrophe. Only when “the danger [is] of an unusual and horrifying kind” can a state “adopt or defend the adoption of extreme measures.”³²⁷ The fight against Nazism was such a fight, in Walzer's view, because it was “a threat to human values so radical that its imminence would surely constitute a supreme emergency.”³²⁸ It also helps to explain why other emergencies are not supreme. When facing the Nazis, the Allied powers were fighting to defend the independence of every European country. Had Britain, for example, been fighting to save itself, Walzer might have endorsed its right to override the rights of people in other countries, but only with “hesitation and worry.”³²⁹ To refer to the domestic analogy, we would normally say that someone may attack someone who is attacking her so as to defend

herself, but she may not attack a bystander, but Walzer claims that the situation that states face is not the same, perhaps because of the number of lives that would be lost.³³⁰

Regardless of when states may override rights, there is also the question of how they may do so. Walzer takes this question extremely seriously, even in the case of just causes. For example, while he argues that the British decision to employ terror bombing against German cities was justified in 1940 – when Churchill believed that it was necessary if Britain was to survive and eventually win the war³³¹ - it had become a war crime by 1942, at which point the assistance of the USSR and of the USA “rendered other possibilities open.”³³² This situation marks the other way in which a situation may fail to be a supreme emergency. Unlike those situations that are emergencies but not supreme ones, in which the state should admit defeat, this is a supreme threat but not an emergency, so the state should continue to wage war but only in accordance with the war convention. As Walzer notes, the terror bombing after 1942 was “utilitarian in character, its emphasis not on victory itself but on the time and price of victory.”³³³

Even if we were to concede that utilitarian calculation were justified in such a case, the scale of the calculations required in World War II makes terror bombing impossible to justify on utilitarian grounds, according to Walzer.³³⁴ To illustrate the point, he concludes the argument about the supreme emergency with a critique of the dropping of the atom bomb on Hiroshima. As Walzer points out, Einstein and many of the scientists involved in the production of the atom bomb were later to say that they would never have been involved in the research if it were not for the fear that Germany would produce an atom bomb first.³³⁵ In other words, they felt that the use of the bomb might be justified against Germany if it were the only way to defeat or deter the Nazis. Walzer argues that the war against the Japanese was not so urgent as to require the use of such a weapon, both because of the nature of the threat that Japan posed and because of the nature of the Japanese regime. Regardless of the nature of the regime, though, Walzer cannot see how the residents of Hiroshima had forfeited their rights not to be attacked directly.³³⁶ Arguments in favor of the use of the bomb against the Japanese made by Truman and his advisors seem to Walzer to reflect either the view that a sliding scale should be used or that war is hell and so anything goes in a just war. In either case, the bombing was implicitly defended on utilitarian grounds.³³⁷

Walzer’s main argument against such a decision is that “there was no room for it, [no] claim to override the rules of war and the rights of Japanese civilians.”³³⁸ Yet he also advances the claim that the bombing demonstrates the impossibility of basing such decision on utilitarian calculations. He points out that the decision to drop the bomb “is not the same as the argument I suggested in the case of Britain in 1940. It does not have the form: if we don’t do x (bomb cities), they will do y (win the war)... Given the actual policy of the U.S. government, it amounts to this: if we don’t do x, we will do y.”³³⁹ The only policies that the US considered were different war crimes: neither the dropping of the atomic bomb nor the incendiary bombing was justified by any supreme emergency. They were justified, in the minds of the US government, by the desire to force Japan to surrender unconditionally. This desire was itself a violation of the war convention because

If people have a right not to be forced to fight, they also have a right not to be forced to continue fighting beyond the point when the war might justly be concluded. Beyond that point, there can be no supreme emergencies, no arguments about military necessity, no cost-accounting in human lives. To press the war further than that is to re-commit the crime of aggression. In the summer of

1945, the victorious Americans owed the Japanese people an experiment in negotiation. To use the atomic bomb, to kill and terrorize civilians, without even attempting such an experiment, was a double crime.³⁴⁰

It is important to Walzer's argument that dropping an atomic bomb on Berlin in 1945 would only have been a single crime. The nature of the Nazi regime would have justified the use of extreme measures against Germany, but by 1945 the threat was insufficiently imminent for the bombing to be legitimate. On the other hand, dropping an atomic bomb on Japan in 1941 might have passed the test of deflecting an imminent defeat, but it could not have passed the test of escaping a disastrous outcome. Only the situation faced by the British between 1940 and 1941/2 qualifies as a supreme emergency only then may atom bombs justly be used.³⁴¹

Having discussed dilemmas of war and the nature of the supreme emergency, Walzer turns in part 5 of *Just and Unjust Wars* to consideration of the question of allocation of responsibility for war crimes. This is, of course, a topic of growing importance in international politics since World War II, but one that is generally considered only from certain angles. Walzer thinks it important to consider the responsibility of political leaders, civilians, soldiers, and military leaders separately.³⁴² The responsibility with which Walzer is concerned is moral responsibility and it is this reflection that leads him to the comment on moral reasoning that I noted above: namely that moral authority is generated by the capacity to "evoke commonly accepted principles in persuasive ways and to apply them to...cases."³⁴³ Hence war crimes tribunals are both defensible and necessary.

The most important people to whom responsibility can be allocated are political leaders, because they are the people who commit the crime of aggression and take their countries to war in the first place. Walzer insists that the defense that politicians are not responsible for "acts of state" is unjustified because such acts "are also acts of particular persons, and when they take the form of aggressive war, particular persons are criminally responsible."³⁴⁴ The head of state and her immediate advisors are the first people who should be held accountable.³⁴⁵ Advisors are to be expected to speak out against immoral commands, even if it means appearing weak because it is either "cowardly" or "wicked" to carry out such policies.³⁴⁶ Democratic citizens can also be held accountable for their state's war crimes, with their responsibility increasing as "the possibility of free action in the communal sphere" increases.³⁴⁷ As a result, in a lengthy consideration of the US populace's responsibility for the war in Vietnam, Walzer acquits of blame those who voted against the war or refused to participate in it (by evading the draft, for example).³⁴⁸ Ordinary citizens who went along with the war "may be blameworthy, not for aggressive war, but for bad faith as citizens."³⁴⁹ Walzer reserves the bulk of the blame for the "group of more knowledgeable men and women, members of what political scientists call the foreign policy elites, who are not so radically distanced from the national leadership." Among such groups, Walzer insists, people had the opportunity and the knowledge of the situation to oppose and hinder the war effort. Such people are "morally complicitous" in the war crimes committed.³⁵⁰

The most immediate, although not the most important, responsibility for war crimes must lie with soldiers in the field. In considering the culpability of soldiers, Walzer is sympathetic to the defense that such acts were committed "in the heat of battle," which he believes to be "in effect, a plea of temporary insanity."³⁵¹ Despite his sympathy, Walzer does not wish to allow soldiers to evade all responsibility for their actions because, as he points out, only small numbers of them allow the heat of battle to let them disregard their ordinary moral sensitivities. Moreover,

he reiterates the insistence that soldiers must accept personal risks if doing so would save civilian lives.³⁵²

Even more common than the defense that a soldier committed a crime in the heat of battle is the defense that he was “just obeying orders.” Walzer considers this defense at length, starting with the stipulation that in such cases, responsibility is seen as being both divided and distributed: the responsibility of the soldier obeying orders is diminished in a way that murderous zeal is not.³⁵³ Further consideration is made by use of the example of the My Lai massacre, in which a company of American soldiers “entered a Vietnamese village where they expected to encounter enemy combatants, found only civilians...and began to kill them...ignoring their obvious helplessness and their pleas for mercy.”³⁵⁴

In this case, Walzer insists that soldiers cannot be entirely freed of their responsibility as they are not “mere instruments of war” and remain capable of refusing to obey orders, as some of the soldiers at My Lai did.³⁵⁵ There are two aspects to the defense of obeying orders, only one of which was operational in My Lai. That is the defense of duress (the other is the claim of ignorance, which is normally the legitimate defense as soldiers may not be aware of what the effects of their actions are, but clearly does not apply in My Lai.)³⁵⁶ Duress would apply if soldiers at My Lai feared that they would be executed for disobeying orders. Although soldiers are trained to face threats, they generally do so collectively; singling out a soldier for special punishment is more like the treatment of a domestic crime. Some people may refuse to commit murder when faced with imminent death, but failing to live up to that standard would be excusable. The officer who orders the execution of disobedient soldiers is, on Walzer’s view, primarily responsible for the crimes.³⁵⁷

Hence, the final group of people with responsibility for war crimes – military officers – must, in Walzer’s view, bear a heavy burden. When “killing and injuring takes place, they are presumptively responsible, for we assume that it lay within their power to prevent it.”³⁵⁸ As I note below, in the discussion of “Political Action,” this view raises difficulty in cases of moral dilemma, in which military commanders may have overridden the war convention during a supreme emergency. According to Walzer, people who are willing to do that must lead us in emergencies, but they then become murderers – albeit in a good cause – and must be condemned for that.³⁵⁹ They will not be punished legally but should perhaps be “dishonored” as was Arthur Harris, leader of the British Bomber Command in World War II, at the end of the war.³⁶⁰ As the supreme emergency is just an instance of the “dirty hands dilemma,” as I have claimed, it is appropriate that the leader in a supreme emergency be dealt with in the same manner as any other political leader with dirty hands. I return to this point later.

I will conclude discussion of *Just and Unjust Wars* by talking about Walzer’s reflections of peaceful resistance, which form the afterword to the book. In discussing this, it is important to remember that, for Walzer, the central tension in war, and that which generates the only genuine military necessities, is that between winning and fighting well, or between “collective survival and human rights.”³⁶¹ It is this tension that makes Walzer – who is sympathetic to the possibility of resisting aggression peaceably - think that nonviolence is practicable only when the rules of war are upheld. Otherwise, “nonviolence is either a disguised form of surrender or a minimalist way of upholding communal values after a military defeat.”³⁶² Against an opponent like Hitler, nonviolent resistance would be impossible. Hitler must be resisted violently or not at all. It is for this reason that I say that nonviolent resistance could not escape the tension between the success of a cause and the maintenance of moral rules in defending the cause. If a doctrine of nonviolent resistance were to replace the theory of the just war, it would still have to make room for a notion

of the supreme emergency. Otherwise it would not be a doctrine of resistance at all. So, in the most crucial of cases, neither just war theory nor nonviolent resistance would prove capable of allowing their adherents to promise never to override human rights. This is why Walzer concludes that “it is no service to the cause to ridicule the rules of war... When one wages a ‘war without weapons,’ one appeals for restraint from men with weapons... The appeal simply restates the argument about human rights and soldierly duties that underlies the war convention.”³⁶³ In concluding the book on this note, Walzer demonstrates that his intention has not been to glorify war but to account for how it can exist in a world that we can live in. Both just war theory and nonviolent resistance seek to find ways to restrain war and it may be the case that the latter can only become effective after the former has succeeded in holding politicians and soldiers to the war convention.

Radical Principles

Despite being a collection of articles written for different magazines – *Dissent*, *The New Republic*, *The New York Review of Books*, *Marxist Perspectives*, *Social Research*, and a defunct British journal called *Views*³⁶⁴ – over the course of 15 years between 1964 and 1979, *Radical Principles* has a surprisingly coherent and unified structure. Walzer claims in the introduction, the only part of the book written especially for its publication, that the essays “reflect... a more or less coherent political perspective”³⁶⁵ and states in the acknowledgements that he considers many of the articles to be “variations on a theme or... a similar argument [made] in rather different ways.”³⁶⁶ I noted above that “Notes for Whoever’s Left,” “The Peace Movement in Retrospect,” and “The Pastoral Retreat of the New Left” share a concern with the decline of political activism on the American left as the 1970s proceeded. Indeed, as we shall see, the book is concerned with four closely related themes and reflects Walzer’s changing perspective on each theme over the years. Those changes are largely the result of alterations in the socio-political context in which Walzer was written, for which see section II above, but also demonstrate developments in his intellectual and political commitments.

The first part of *Radical Principles* – “*Liberalism in Retreat*” - touches on dilemmas facing liberalism and the American welfare state as it confronts social change and opposition from both right and left. These changes range from the apparent decline in civility³⁶⁷ to the exclusion of groups of men and women from the benefits of welfare provision.³⁶⁸ In the second part – “*The New Left*” - Walzer turns to the political activity of the New Left and its decline. This is the section of the book in which the three articles mentioned in the previous paragraph appear; they make up the fourth, fifth and sixth essays in the section. The first three essays of the part share the topic of the second three, except that, being written earlier, they are more optimistic about the prospects for political activism. Walzer turns to the topic of “*Social Change*” in part three of the book, and with the change in theme comes a concomitant increase in the methodology of the pieces and an increasingly theoretical approach.³⁶⁹ Walzer considers the question of whether modernization theory is correct in its assumption that each nation will ultimately follow the same path of socio-economic development, the possibility of a “vanguardless revolution,”³⁷⁰ and the implications for both intellectual life and politics of intellectuals taking an increasing part in the governance of the country. Part four considers a set of issues facing “*Democratic Socialism*,” ranging from the need for self-restraint to the democratic approach to school provision and whether citizens can be seen to have rights to political involvement analogous to workers’ demand for industrial democracy.

Taken as a whole, we can see the central question of the book to be how the “deep principles”³⁷¹ of socialists and democrats can be sustained, and in what ways they need to be altered, in the United States of the 1960s and 1970s. The first two parts of the book are directly concerned with the problems facing the country and the prospects of the American left being able to tackle those problems, as well as with its relationship with mainstream liberalism and with neo-conservatism. The third and fourth parts of the book consider how democratic socialists might reorder American society if they had the opportunity to do so, with part three focusing on developments at the national – and international – level, and part four addressing issues of local and individual concern.³⁷² What Walzer is concerned to do in *Radical Principles* is provide a “picture” of an alternative to Brecht’s Mahagonny.³⁷³ (Indeed, Walzer’s “great city” would be the “opposite” of Mahagonny.)³⁷⁴

What, then, would that city contain? Walzer takes as a framework the city outlined by Walt Whitman in “Song of the Broad-Axe”. The key elements are that “the city...is beloved by [its citizens], and loves them in return, and understands them,” that “the populace rise at once against the never-ending audacity of elected persons,” that “outside authority enters always after the precedence of inside authority,” that “the citizen is always the head and ideal – and President, Mayor, Governor, and what not, are agents for pay,” and that “women...enter the public assembly and take places the same as men.”³⁷⁵ Such a city is not easily built, Walzer recognizes, because it is “too easy in its democratic faith, untouched by the terrors of the twentieth century.”³⁷⁶ Nonetheless, the principles that it notes are what he argues in favor of throughout *Radical Principles*.

It is important to note, given that Walzer’s just war theory was derided by the various cosmopolitan liberals detailed in the section on “The Moral Standing of States” below as being conservative, that he takes *Radical Principles* to be not just the “reflections of an unreconstructed democrat” but of a socialist. Throughout the book he makes claims similar to the following: “the goal of democrats and socialists is to share and legitimize, but not to abolish property.”³⁷⁷ Walzer considers himself to be a democratic socialist, committed to economic redistribution and greater inclusion of minority groups as well as to popular involvement in decision-making. Socialists may not be surprised to see liberals characterize their arguments as having commonalities with conservatism, but they wish to insist that the characterization is false. In what follows, I explain how Walzer does this.

Walzer’s attitude towards the welfare state is ambiguous: while it “represents...an enormous political achievement and generates its own workaday politics, [it] does not by itself produce either a community of workers or a community of citizens. It carries us beyond the classic structures of bourgeois society but not yet into a socialist society.”³⁷⁸ The importance of this point is twofold. First, it illustrates Walzer’s dual commitment to socialism – in the form of a community of workers – and to democracy, which is a community of citizens. Secondly, it demonstrates that Walzer’s socialism is not of the Marxist variety, which would see the welfare state as simply engulfing proletarians in false ideology.

In his introduction to *Radical Principles*, Walzer explains the distinction between his own view and that of Marxism as centering on the philosophy of history and the explanation of contemporary society. Walzer rejects any account of society that relies on a “deep theory” such as the Marxist argument that all previous history is the history of class conflict.³⁷⁹ Class analysis is illuminating, in Walzer’s view, and may tell us much about our everyday lives, but the experience of the 20th century, with its wars, its nationalism and the inability of workers’ parties to lead us towards socialist societies, belies the attempt to explain social interaction as based

simply on class identity. Moreover, Marxism has failed to account for the fact that liberal capitalism has managed to bring a certain degree of “liberation” to the masses, because it “consistently underestimated the significance of...legal equality and legitimate opposition.”³⁸⁰ Where the old left thought that repression on the grounds of religion, race, sex and so on were endemic to capitalism, experience shows that liberal culture may produce a “drift” away from such oppression, although a complete escape from them still seems some way off.³⁸¹

The task of the five chapters that make up part I of the book is, in essence, to explain why repression remains a problem. Walzer’s basic argument is that welfare liberalism operates by appeasing different groups with increased rights and services, but does not manage to involve people directly enough in the political process. As he puts it,

Welfare payments are important, and equal treatment even more so, but by themselves they are inadequate because they suggest the activity of small groups, benevolent elites, who do the paying and the treating. Democracy is the activity of the rest of us, the rule of the people in their assemblies and committees, arguing over every aspect of the common life. Hence democracy and socialism are, roughly speaking, the same thing: two forms of procedural justice, focused on a certain conception of human *doing* that expresses the deepest values we associate with human *being*.³⁸²

Part I of *Radical Principles* explains why liberalism, at least in its welfare state instantiation, cannot ultimately satisfy democratic socialists. This is because its conception of human doing is not inclusive enough: in liberalism, most people do not have the opportunity to argue over any aspect of the common life, let alone all of them.³⁸³ Liberalism makes politics into an instrumental activity³⁸⁴ and not an end in itself. Even if it were to include everyone within the scope of economic redistribution, a further redistribution would be required so as to produce greater equality in the sphere of political decision-making. This argument is, then, to a certain degree a foretaste of the argument of *Spheres of Justice* about the importance of keeping distributive spheres separate and preventing domination. More immediately, it explains the unity of the articles in part I, each of which takes up the non-inclusiveness of American liberalism in a different aspect.

The central chapter of this part of the book is unquestionable “Dissatisfaction in the Welfare State,” (1970) which is by some distance the longest chapter in the book.³⁸⁵ I have already discussed its major argument, which is that when the welfare state “extends its benefits to all those men and women who are at present its occasional victims, its nominal or partial members,”³⁸⁶ liberalism will be incapable of satisfying citizens’ subsequent demands. Here I will simply outline the details of Walzer’s case. As I also said, Walzer does not want to deny the achievements of the welfare state, as Marxists do; in fact, he credits it with four important things: 1) increasing “enlightenment” about politics and its function;³⁸⁷ 2) the “growing rationality and legitimacy of the state”; 3) “the vast increase in [the state’s] size”; 4) “the decline of political life”³⁸⁸.

The problem is that the advance of the welfare state is concomitant with an increase in state power and hence results in the “dangers of administrative tyranny.”³⁸⁹ Rather than being self-governing, the citizens of a welfare state are perceived as individuals who are “absolutely free to make [their] own choices and measure [their] own happiness. In fact, however, no such individual has ever existed.”³⁹⁰ This is what Walzer meant in the point mentioned earlier about

the conceptions of human being and doing and the differences between the democratic socialist conceptions and the liberal ones. If we were free and rational individuals, autonomous in our own right, then the welfare state would serve us just fine. As we are not, it does not and probably cannot. The welfare state can never fulfill all our desires because it is based on a false conception of human nature. As Walzer puts it,

Men and women live in groups and always find that they have limited choices and share, without having chosen, social standards. If they are ever to be free to choose new limits and standards, they must do so in some cooperative fashion, arguing among themselves, reaching a common decision. But to do this, to act collectively like the sovereign individual of the utilitarians, they must share political power. Government must be responsive to their concrete wills and not merely (as at present) to their conventionally defined desires.³⁹¹

Walzer's argument here is one that would become familiar in the writings of the communitarians of the 1980s. We can imagine Michael Sandel or Charles Taylor arguing that individuals can become sovereign only in collective deliberation. Walzer here means the point to address the limitations of a purely redistributive model of social equality, although he remains committed to that equality in a way in which Sandel or Taylor are not (or at least not so unambiguously). For Walzer, as for Taylor and Sandel, politics should not be instrumental and people need to be involved in collective decision-making. Where Walzer's arguments strike a more unique note is in the claim that political involvement is to be valued not just because it is necessary in the process of character-formation but also because citizens must be free to shape or reshape the welfare system and its distribution of benefits.³⁹²

It is for that reason that he insists that the debate between liberals and socialists cannot be characterized as one between individualists and collectivists. For both, says Walzer, "the individual is recognized as the ultimate value; socialists and liberals unite in opposing any ideology that assigns to the state a moral being independent of the willfulness and rationality of its particular members."³⁹³ Rather the debate is about whether politics is "purely instrumental" or not. On the socialist account, it cannot be: "liberal utilitarianism" is flawed because it involves "a surrender of any popular role in determining the shape and substance...of our common life."³⁹⁴ Hence the completion of the process of increasing inclusiveness within the welfare state could not satisfy democratic socialists. Like John Stuart Mill considering whether the achievement of his activist ambitions would make him happy, socialists must say that such a completion would not fulfill their desires.³⁹⁵

Instead, socialists will continue to express collective demands and political involvement. Such desires could be achieved in culture, in education, in smaller scale activity:³⁹⁶ in activities that go beyond the state. The state will survive but it must be "held tightly to its own limits...The state is not going to wither away; it must be hollowed out."³⁹⁷ Inside the hollow, two types of organization will play a bigger part in common life: first, "the great functional organizations" such as trade unions; second, "the local units of work, education, and culture."³⁹⁸ As citizens can be more involved in such activities than the welfare state allows, so their demands for collective decision-making will be more adequately heard. Socialists' primary concern is not with the power of the state but with "power *right here*, on this shop floor, in this...university, in this city...such power must always be won 'from below'".³⁹⁹ Walzer's socialism is, then, one in which local concerns make headway against centrifugal forces, in which the "politics of

insurgency”⁴⁰⁰ replaces revolution, and in which watchfulness towards the state is combined with paradoxical recognition that no state has ever been more legitimate.⁴⁰¹

I have considered the arguments of “Dissatisfaction in the Welfare State” at length because it sums up many of the key themes of *Radical Principles* and shows how Walzer was already developing some of the ideas that were to be fully developed in *Spheres of Justice* and were to see him labeled a communitarian: the importance of political involvement and local activity, the specificity of political and distributive principles, and the unjustness of letting politics overstep its “sphere” of social life and become an oppressive force. It should, however, be remembered that in *Spheres of Justice* Walzer is more concerned about the domination of the market.

The remaining articles in part I can be considered more briefly. In “Watergate without the President,” (1974) Walzer considers why it is that, unlike in *Hamlet*’s Denmark, the “something” that is rotten in the state is not simply the corruption of its leader.⁴⁰² Rather, the US is beset by corporate illegality that must renew socialist calls for corporate leaders to become “public officials... responsible to a determinate constituency,”⁴⁰³ and cynicism about politics caused by the lack of genuine opposition party.⁴⁰⁴ Walzer concludes that impeachment of Nixon would be an inspiring moment but purely a “ritual,” more or less hollow without the “reappearance of a republican politics.”⁴⁰⁵

“Social Origins of Conservative Politics” and “Nervous Liberals” both address the neoconservative movement in the United States, one from the vantage point of the defeated Goldwater campaign in 1964, the other on the eve of the Reagan presidency, in 1979. Walzer denies that the appeal of Goldwater was predominantly in its perceived “backlash” against modern American life, as scholars such as Richard Hofstadter and S. M. Lipset had argued,⁴⁰⁶ and points out that many of Goldwater’s staunchest supporters were “suave and aggressive college graduates, young corporate executives on their way up... confident, tough-minded, power-hungry.”⁴⁰⁷ Rather Walzer sees the Goldwater movement as representing the interests of the new upper middle class, which felt threatened by “the very moderate egalitarian tendencies of the welfare state.”⁴⁰⁸ He concludes that Goldwaterism was moved far more by “modern selfishness” and “modern discontent” than by “traditionalist revolt.”⁴⁰⁹ In a sense, then, the article can be read as a defense of the welfare state and its necessary accomplishments. However, the arguments of “Dissatisfaction in the Welfare State” are echoed here, when Walzer writes that the welfare state “rests upon strong traditions of communal cooperation and support, traditions best preserved during the past hundred years in the unions.”⁴¹⁰ Once again, in other words, his argument is that the welfare state is important but insufficient, but here he argues that increased political involvement is not only a necessary corollary of the extension of the welfare state but a necessary factor in its defense. Without “some sort of urban communal life,” he argues, right-wing activism will return in a strong form than that of the Goldwater movement.⁴¹¹

In “Nervous Liberals,” Walzer looks back on the neoconservative movement at a time when it had indeed become much stronger than under Goldwater. He argues that neoconservatives are liberals beset by a “neo-sense of crisis and loss.”⁴¹² Walzer’s neologism is intended to express his conviction that, unlike the conservatism of Hooker and Burke, the conservatism of the neoconservatives is not “genuine” because the crisis of which they speak is much overstated. Walzer’s central claim is that the talk about the “erosion” of traditional values such as deference and respect implies both a picture of an unspecified golden age and an inaccurate picture of the present, in which the activism of the 1960s had continued on throughout the 1970s.⁴¹³ In fact, says Walzer, the late 1970s was an era in which students, for example, were

more deferential than they had been at any point since 1960. What Walzer really thinks the “nervous liberals” are nervous about is equality, a “specter that haunts the neoconservative mind.”⁴¹⁴ For this reason, the neoconservative agenda cannot possibly be fulfilled, because increased equality and participation are the only means by which “mutual aid and self-restraint” can possibly be fostered in the contemporary USA.⁴¹⁵

Walzer expresses a similar point in “Civility and Civic Virtue in Contemporary America” (1974). Here he notes the contemporary sense that political commitment and civic virtues is an instance of the “most common historical perception,” namely, that of decline and fall.⁴¹⁶ Arguing that the only way to judge such a claim is against the backdrop of what the values that are in decline are, Walzer sets out a list of what he takes to be the requirements of citizenship in the contemporary USA. There are five main expectations: first, “some degree of commitment or loyalty...political allegiance”;⁴¹⁷ secondly, that citizens be prepared to defend their country and, if necessary, to die while doing so;⁴¹⁸ thirdly, that citizens “obey the law and...maintain a certain decorum of behavior...that is commonly called civility” but also includes politeness and used to be taken to include political virtues;⁴¹⁹ fourthly, that citizens tolerate each other;⁴²⁰ and finally, that citizens actively participate in political life.⁴²¹ These do not, Walzer says, form a “coherent whole”, as the first and fifth require conviction and zeal, while the third and fourth may undermine that sense of commitment.⁴²²

The question is how to best encourage cultivation of those virtues. As in the other articles in the section, Walzer states that here liberalism is inadequate: it “offers so few emotional rewards...lacks warmth and intimacy.”⁴²³ Rather, the “working principle of democratic socialism,” which states that politics must be made more open to all and that participation be increased, is the only way to change the situation.⁴²⁴ In particular, corporate government must be democratized, political activity decentralized to allow for smaller scale decision making, and movements that can claim greater commitment than political parties must be encouraged.⁴²⁵ “Civility and Civic Virtue” reiterates the themes that Walzer was concerned with in the other articles in part I of *Radical Principles* and concludes, as in “Dissatisfaction in the Welfare State,” by arguing that democratic socialist politics “must not supersede but stand in constant tension with the liberalism of our society.”⁴²⁶

Part II of *Radical Principles* is for the most part concerned with the same day-to-day issues of American political life as part I, but here attention is focused not on why liberalism cannot be the answer to all the country’s problems but on left-wing alternatives that might be, and in particular on the challenges facing the “New Left” as it seeks to rally Americans to the cause of social change. In “The New Left and the Old” (1967-8), Walzer notes how quickly after its emergence in the early 1960s, the New Left found itself encumbered by difficult choices and how soon “a sense of isolation, an embittered mood, a dangerous desperation” affected many of its members.⁴²⁷ Citing the Vietnam War as the principal cause of this pessimism, Walzer sets out to explore various other elements of it, and in so doing concludes that many of the struggles that the New Left faced were caused by the inherent difficulties affecting affluent middle-class youths trying to engaged in community organization in inner-city slums of which they had little personal experience.⁴²⁸ The war exacerbated this tendency because it promoted a view of the world that sees the US as an imperial power, which as an Old Left ideology encourages the perception that the New Left has inherited “not the victories but the defeats of the past” and turns it “from a moral enclave into a political sect.”⁴²⁹ Walzer concludes that New Left success cannot be achieved in isolation from wider changes in American democracy and, above all, the realization of the welfare state. In other words “Americans must earn the right to have a *New*

Left by completing the work of the Old.”⁴³⁰ As in the previous articles, in other words, Walzer sees the welfare state as a necessary condition of subsequent leftist activism. Until the welfare state includes all or nearly all groups of American citizens within its reach, changes that seek to go beyond a system of welfare and democratize the decision-making processes of American social and political life, will face an inescapable quandary.

I discussed “A Day in the Life of a Socialist Citizen” (1968) in the previous chapter and do not wish to rehearse its arguments in any detail here. One point worthy of note is that in tenor it is more in the vein of “Dissatisfaction in the Welfare State” than of “The New Left and the Old” in so far as it focuses on the changes in political life that will be necessary after the achievement of a socialist system and not on the necessary preconditions of such a system. Walzer’s essential argument is that in a socialist society political activity must remain an important feature of everyday life, contrary to the Marxist notion that the state would wither away. As a result, his democratic socialism in this sense stands in opposition to both Marxism and liberalism in that it sees politics as an essential element of any human society and as being valuable in itself rather than as an instrumental activity.

In “Violence: The Police, the Militants, and the Rest of Us,” (1971) Walzer considers what are the appropriate uses of violence in a democratic system. Denying Weber’s maxim that the state possesses a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence, he argues instead that the state should control “the means of massive violence.”⁴³¹ Thus, his concern is less with the upsurge in “unofficial violence” that occurred in the 1960s than it is with the increase in police powers and “government surveillance over political activity” that resulted from that upsurge.⁴³² Walzer denies that this should be seen as a war against the American left but nonetheless thinks that it raises difficult questions about the role of law enforcement in American society.⁴³³ His major argument in the article is to insist on the importance of better training and disciplining for police combined with an end to left-wing activity that seeks to promote police violence.⁴³⁴ However, the latter is more problematic for democrats because police brutality can be condemned publicly in a way that unofficial violence cannot be. As a result, “*laissez faire* on the Left makes statist of us all.”⁴³⁵ Only “the restoration of a framework of civility within which the police, the militants, and the rest of us can life...together” will allow the development of a political agenda in which social and political change is possible.⁴³⁶

I discussed the three remaining articles in part II of *Radical Principles* earlier because they all relate to the topic of the diminution of left-wing activism that occurred in the USA during the 1970s. Each strikes a somewhat somber note, as a result, but nonetheless Walzer remains cautiously optimistic for the future. In “Notes for Whoever’s Left” (1972) Walzer argues that the achievements of the movement in the 1960s could be achieved again if the sectarianism that the New Left had descended into transformed into a unity of purpose among the different groups on the left.⁴³⁷ He argues that the crucial problems facing the New Left are the questions of its relationship with those left-leaning liberals with whom they had become increasingly estranged and insists that closer ties must be fostered and that race must not be a factor in determining membership of groups: “The most painful moment in the history of the sixties came when white liberals and radical were expelled from the civil rights movement.”⁴³⁸ The left must come to terms with the requirements of a pluralist society and accept support from whatever quarter it can. Furthermore, although socialism remains the ultimate goal of the left, it is not “an immediate political issue in the United States” and practical work must focus on specific issues such as civil liberties, social welfare, education and housing.⁴³⁹

In “The Peace Movement in Retrospect” (1973), Walzer provides reasons for the failure of the anti-Vietnam War movement to secure the US’s withdrawal from Vietnam despite popular support. Although support “hovered just under 40 per cent” throughout the years between 1967 and 1972, the movement could not progress further because it was “unable to penetrate significantly into the ranks of organized labor and of those working-class ethnic groups that have traditionally been the strength of the Democratic party.”⁴⁴⁰ The major reason for this was that senior Democrats were implicated in the war and could not break away from it. However, the movement did have beneficial effects because it led to a “reformed Democratic party” and won much support among American liberals because of increased cynicism towards the American government.⁴⁴¹ As a result,

the peace movement was a partial success. It made the waging of the war morally costly; it re-established the importance of moral and legal discourse about military conduct and political authority; it created a larger constituency of conscientious men and women than the country had seen before (and made some of them into experienced politicians); it began, perhaps, the long process of setting limits to what governments can do and to what citizens can bear.⁴⁴²

“The Peace Movement” is an important article, then, because it shows the genesis of some of Walzer’s arguments from *Just and Unjust Wars* and the importance of the Vietnam War in setting him thinking about the ethics of war.

In “The Pastoral Retreat of the New Left” (1979), Walzer draws some positive conclusions from the retreat of left-wing activity into issues of local, rather than national, affairs. In particular, he echoes arguments made in “Dissatisfaction in the Welfare State” about the model of citizenship that the welfare state runs upon. As he puts it, “Organizing and advocacy in the contemporary welfare state create clients...not self-determining men and women.”⁴⁴³ Yet a better society would not be one of clients but of citizens and so, “the shift from organizing to advocacy has to be reversed, so that cohesive groups take shape whose members are not only consumers of benefits but active participants, capable of mutual assistance.”⁴⁴⁴ Although he is not sure how such a reversal might be achieved, Walzer argues that it will require local activists and so concludes that the pastoral retreat is something to which socialists should be sympathetic.

In part III of *Radical Principles*, Walzer turns to issues of social change, from a more theoretical perspective. The important chapter in this section is “A Theory of Revolution” (1979), but I will first deal briefly with the other two. In “Modernization” (1964), Walzer reviews the ideas of W. W. Rostow, Daniel Lerner, S. M. Lipset, Gabriel Almond and others who had suggested that the social changes taking place in Africa and Asia could be usefully compared with changes that occurred in Europe in the past.⁴⁴⁵ In a move typical of Walzer, he claims that such work is too self-congratulatory and unhistorical and as a result only manages to suggest connections between past and present and not between past and future.⁴⁴⁶ Walzer insists that this leaves modernization theory explaining too little because “it fails to alert the writers who use it to that which is transient in the present” as, despite the empirical evidence cited in the previous note, a “theory with one revolution is a theory with one revolution too few.” Moreover, modernization theory “*fails to provide any very interesting means of distinguishing among different presents.*”⁴⁴⁷ For example, although it may be true that there are similarities between the USSR and the USA, Walzer insists that modernization theory cannot explain the particular ways in which the former will develop and that “We will continue to live in significantly different

societies.”⁴⁴⁸ Modernization theory, Walzer concludes, is significantly limited as an explanation of the “advanced” countries, because the “nearer one is to the fully realized modern, the more disturbing is the idea that radical social change is a thing of the past.”⁴⁴⁹ Any satisfying account of contemporary modernity must offer more choice of destination to those to whom it is addressed. The ultimate failure of modernization theory is in its unwillingness “to confront the modern world in a critical way.”⁴⁵⁰ It is, in a sense, rather like those advocates of the welfare state who see the extension of its coverage to all sectors of American life as marking the completion of the movement towards social equality.

“Intellectuals to Power” (1980) is the most recent article in *Radical Principles*. In it, Walzer reviews G. Konrad and I. Szelenyi’s *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power* and Alvin Gouldner’s *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class*, both of which seek to offer accounts of the “new class” of public intellectuals or “the intellectual-as-advisor.”⁴⁵¹ Walzer argues that insofar as the contemporary state is committed to “planning, welfare, and redistribution, it plainly requires a vast civil service of educated people; intellectuals are its natural rulers.”⁴⁵² He then addresses the question of whether intellectuals will be the class that succeeds the bourgeoisie, as the workers have not managed to do. On Walzer’s account, Konrad and Szelenyi are right to argue that intellectuals are the next class and not the ultimate class, whereas Gouldner is somewhat more certain of intellectual ascendancy than he should be based on the evidence.⁴⁵³ Walzer makes the case that, although the “new intelligentsia” has been integrated into the bourgeoisie, such a shift was relatively straightforward and did not “entail a massive shift in power relations.”⁴⁵⁴ In fact, he thinks that intellectuals will remain on the margins of political power as long as they remain “real intellectuals” because “intellectuals belong to a category that isn’t only sociological but also and more importantly normative...they are poets too...legislators for the mind and spirit...because of that, they can never be, we can never conceive them to be, the members of a ruling class.”⁴⁵⁵

“A Theory of Revolution” (1979) is Walzer’s contribution to the post-Marx debate about revolution. As such it is an important theoretical account of his conception of democratic socialism and I will consider it at length. In the article, Walzer considers the extent to which Lenin and Trotsky’s “foundations for a theory of [revolutionary] outcomes” might be fleshed out, because he posits it to be the case that Marxists have generally not been much interested in what happens after the revolution.⁴⁵⁶ This is important for Walzer because of the precise nature of a revolution: it is not a coup or (normally) a struggle against colonizers, but a “conscious [attempt] to establish a new moral and material world and to impose, or evoke, radically new patterns of day-to-day conduct.”⁴⁵⁷ As the great revolutions of England, France, Russia and China have failed to achieve a free world, the question of the nature of revolution must be reopened.

The focus of Walzer’s argument is on the Leninist notion of the vanguard party drawn largely from outside the class of revolutionaries. A vanguard is the intellectual elite that provides both ideology and practical leadership for the revolutionary cause.⁴⁵⁸ In any revolution, the vanguard is drawn from similar strata of society, in particular from the middle class and from professional groups. On Lenin’s account, the vanguard and the revolutionary class will have a consciousness specific to itself: that of the latter is determined by the shared interests of its members as determined by the economic order, while that of the former emerges from “the work of intellectuals somehow cut loose from the constraints of the old order.”⁴⁵⁹ Yet herein lies a problem for the revolution: although vanguard consciousness is frequently radical, it is characteristically at odds with that of the revolutionary class, whose interests are determined by

their specific situation and not by any particular revolutionary creed. The consciousnesses overlap but “produce two different sorts of political association. Class politics is catholic and inclusive... Vanguard groups... are closed and exclusive.”⁴⁶⁰ Members of the vanguard have chosen to join it and have been accepted by their peers. Membership is not determined by shared experience but by shared belief. According to Walzer, revolutionary history can best be understood as “the working-out of the tension between these different notions and between the two groups of men and women who carry them.”⁴⁶¹ This means that revolutions may descend into terror or dictatorship and that the success of the post-revolutionary government depends on the interaction between the vanguard and the revolutionary class. The study of this relationship is hence of crucial importance to the theory of revolution.⁴⁶²

Walzer argues that the ideology of the vanguard and the nature of terror are similar in each major revolution.⁴⁶³ Calvinism, Marxism, and republicanism all impose an “intellectual regimen” on their adherents, which consists of study, knowledge of historical phenomena, doctrinal acceptance, and zeal.⁴⁶⁴ In each case, the vanguard insists that the revolutionary class must exercise “self-control” and represses the immediate demands of the class. As a result, the vanguard becomes “more and more like... other ruling groups... increasingly accustomed to the prerogatives of government, increasingly isolated from their own people.”⁴⁶⁵ As a result, vanguard consciousness becomes, in Walzer’s view, routinized and the revolution must seek to limit its dominance.⁴⁶⁶

If the vanguard is likely to become like a ruling class and to insist that the revolutionary class limits its demands, then the danger for a theory of revolutionary outcomes is that the revolution will be subverted either by personal rule or, and more likely in Walzer’s view, by vanguard domination. He thus posits that a “vanguardless” revolution must be the aim of revolutionaries. This is because if the vanguard does continue to hold power, it will control the other social classes, thus denying them political power even if it grants them economic redistribution. Moreover, in the process of routinization it will cease to take sufficient cognizance of the interests of those for whom the revolution was carried out.⁴⁶⁷ As a revolution without a vanguard is at least imaginable, it is on Walzer’s view, important to imagine it.

Walzer stresses that a vanguardless revolution is not a leaderless one: simply one without a “closed ideological group [of leaders] responsible to one another and to no one else.”⁴⁶⁸ Walzer’s argument can be seen as of the same type as the claim with which he was to start *Spheres of Justice*: namely, that although equality “simply understood” is an “idea ripe for betrayal,” this does not mean that we should give up on the hope of achieving an egalitarian society. A revolution with leaders can still avoid subversion by the goals of the leaders, so long as the leaders do not form a distinct “sphere” of society and are accountable to their constituents. Moreover, the absence of a vanguard need not mean the absence of radical intellectuals with groups of their own, simply that these groups are “ginger groups, attached to the larger movement... but unable to control it. Barred from conspiracy... they will be forced to argue, persuade, and exhort.”⁴⁶⁹ Argument is, then, as essential to the achievement of socialism – presuming that it requires a revolution to achieve a socialist society – as it is to the maintenance of democracy.

Yet Walzer has stated that class-consciousness tends towards the achievement of possible accommodations and that only through vanguard consciousness was a revolutionary creed possible. So how can there be a vanguardless revolution? His response is that such a revolution will be a “gradual movement” or “long march” – a series of accommodations in which the revolutionary class gradually increases its influence until they eventually form something akin to

a “worker’s republic.”⁴⁷⁰ This is, on Walzer’s view, the sort of revolution that is possible in a highly industrialized country where the workers are sufficiently organized to make it possible. Although western workers have not yet proven capable of maintaining democratic organizations, they have not yet succumbed to vanguard leadership but to being governed by bureaucrats.⁴⁷¹ So, in concluding “A Theory of Revolution,” Walzer reiterates the argument of “Modernization” that revolution to a socialist state must come from a capitalist one – an old Marxist point – as one revolution is a revolution too few and the argument that has been repeated throughout *Radical Principles* that democracy is an essential component of socialism. “A Theory of Revolution” is not, then, important merely because it contributes to a debate within socialism, but also because it explains how Walzer’s democratic socialism can be argued to be continuous with Marxism and more revolutionary forms of socialism, even if not identical to them.

If parts I and II of *Radical Principles* explain the malaise of American society and part III the types of social change that might be necessary to alter the situation, part IV more centrally focuses on issues within a democratic socialist society. “In Defense of Equality” is – as a precursor of *Spheres of Justice* – by far the most important article in this section, but I will again take the other three articles into consideration briefly first. In “Democratic Schools” (1976), Walzer argues that educational provision is not a matter that can be seen as subject simply to distributive principles. Although equal provision is necessary to a flourishing education system, it is not sufficient. Rather, in a pluralist society, education is a matter of “association” – of which children should attend which school and how children should be allocated to classrooms.⁴⁷² So Walzer spends the article evaluating five associative principles that might be applied to schools according to the guideline that “*the principle on which children are coercively associated should anticipate the pattern that would prevail among adults in a world of freedom and equality.*”⁴⁷³ Although each of those principles has its particular appeals and limitations, Walzer concludes that the neighborhood in which the child lives should be an overriding factor in the selection of a school for that child. This is because such a principle “invites participation within a familiar world; its institutions are built to a human scale. It opens the way to every form of diversity while still permitting people who choose to do so to live...together...promises local excitement.”⁴⁷⁴ In other words, in this article Walzer reiterates that local provision and activity is a key radical principle, and is important to his notion of democratic socialism.

In “Town Meetings and Workers’ Control” A Story for Socialists” (1978), Walzer compares the socialist arguments against economic domination with a parable about political control over a certain territory. His aim is to demonstrate that the “best” argument for socialism is political, “an extension of the defense of democracy.”⁴⁷⁵ Arguing that the “central commitment of socialist politics” is “*the abolition of the power of man over man,*”⁴⁷⁶ Walzer claims that socialists’ main program is to reject claims to authority, in particular the direct and indirect ways in which people are subject to the “arbitrary will of another.”⁴⁷⁷ Democratic socialists object to both forms of subjugation.

Walzer uses a medieval maxim to express the way in which socialists challenge indirect authority and structures the rest of his argument around that maxim. It is that “*what touches all should be decided by all.*”⁴⁷⁸ This maxim is the source of the opposition to both political and economic inequalities.⁴⁷⁹ Whereas democrats opposed the forms of ownership that were characteristic of a feudal economy, and hence rejected decision-making that touched all being the domain of the few in the realm of politics, non-socialist democrats do not always do so in economic life. Hence “socialism has commonly been described as the extension of democratic decision making from the political to the economic realm.”⁴⁸⁰ Walzer rejects the distinction

between the two realms and says that the argument for socialism suggests the similarity between economic and political decision-making. As a result, he concludes, ownership of the state and ownership of private corporations should be rejected for the same reasons and democrats should be socialist democrats.⁴⁸¹

In “Socialism and Self-Restraint” (1979), Walzer argues that his former views about the welfare state – that it could and should include everyone – must now be modified to note its dependence on a non-selfish ethos. By 1979, he had come to think that the success of the welfare state was dependent on self-restraint, which was itself dependent on “civism,” and that in turn dependent on equality.⁴⁸² (Walzer takes civism to be the peacetime equivalent of patriotism, and reliant upon a sense of being participants in a common project, subject to common dangers, and with the expectation that they will make sacrifices for the common good). Without civism, the welfare state will be marred by evasion and deceit and fail to include everyone. In other words, by 1979, Walzer wished to revise his earlier claim that the welfare state could take us so far, but that socialist principles would then be needed to augment liberal ones. Now, insofar as liberalism rests on an ethic of self-interested behavior, he did not think it could take us even that far.

“In Defense of Equality” (1973) is in many ways the most important article in *Radical Principles* because it is Walzer’s first version of the argument that was to become *Spheres of Justice*, his most important contribution to the debate about distributive justice that raged in the 1970s and 1980s. As in *Spheres*, in “In Defense” Walzer posits the notion that equality must, if it is to be realistically defended, be conceived pluralistically. He does not yet talk of “complex equality,” but he does argue that, “egalitarianism requires that many bells should ring. Different goods should be distributed to different people for different reasons.”⁴⁸³ This is the kernel of the thesis of *Spheres*, namely that equality cannot be understood “simply” as, say, equality of resources, or equality of welfare, or equality of opportunity. In fact, it cannot be considered as simply a matter of economic distribution, or of power, or of access to services. Rather, equality “requires a diversity of [distributive] principles, which mirrors the diversity both of mankind and of social goods. Whenever equality in this sense does not prevail, we have a kind of tyranny.”⁴⁸⁴ In other words, by 1973 Walzer had already developed the notion of distributive spheres⁴⁸⁵ and the idea that equality must be understood to mean that each sphere is autonomous from each other so that those with advantages in any one sphere do not dominate overall.

In developing this argument in “In Defense of Equality,” Walzer starts by opposing the conservative thesis – posited shortly before by Irving Kristol in *Commentary* magazine – that equality is a utopian ideal because human beings are unequal in ability. Conservatives argue, Walzer says, “that whatever the division of wealth and power is, it naturally is, and that all efforts to change it, temporarily successful in proportion to their bloodiness, must be futile in the end.”⁴⁸⁶ As a result, conservatives are inclined to argue that egalitarianism is the desire simply of intellectuals embittered by the fact that the capitalist economic system does not make them as influential as they feel that they should be. Only the perverse would criticize inequality. This is the position that Walzer sets out to attack.

In particular, he wishes to object to Kristol’s argument that the only way to increase equality would be to reduce the freedom of Americans, because if people are “set free from the coerciveness of the state” they “will distribute themselves in a more natural way...[that] reflects the real inequalities of mankind.”⁴⁸⁷ On Kristol’s view, talents are distributed along a bell-shaped curve and “in all modern bourgeois societies” incomes are distributed along another bell-shaped curve that is an echo of the curve for abilities.⁴⁸⁸ So, says Walzer, the “defense of inequality reduces to these two propositions: that talent is distributed unequally and that talent will out.”⁴⁸⁹

Walzer does not immediately attack the claim that people should be rewarded for their talents but expresses surprise that anyone would think that human abilities would be distributed along a single curve, rather than different curves for different skills. If there are, as Walzer posits, different curves for such skills as “intelligence, physical strength, agility and grace, artistic creativity, mechanical skill, leadership, endurance, memory, psychological insight, the capacity for hard work,” then we have to ask which curve is echoed by that of income and which one should be.⁴⁹⁰ Walzer’s main objection is that no one talent ought to dominate the income curve; rather, “Every human talent should be developed and expressed... isn’t it odd, and morally implausible and unsatisfying, that [every social good] should be distributed to people with a talent for making money?”⁴⁹¹

To provide a concrete example, Walzer turns – as he was to again in *Spheres* – to medical care, arguing that the principle by which it should be distributed is simply sickness, and not wealth, intelligence or virtue. If this were to happen, we would be on the way to an egalitarian society because “it [such a distributive principle] would call the dominance of the income curve dramatically into question.”⁴⁹² Allowing wealth to dominate the sphere of medical distribution is a form of tyranny because medical care is not the sphere of wealth.

It is important to note that the implication of Walzer’s theory of distributive justice is that it is not unjust for there to be inequalities in any one sphere: “each man reigns in his own [sphere], not elsewhere.”⁴⁹³ The fact is, he claims, that different responses are appropriate to different qualities, e.g. “love is the proper response to charm, fear to strength, and belief to learning.” As in *Spheres*, Walzer illustrates his point with a quote from Marx to the effect that loving without being loved in return is not unjust but simply unfortunate.⁴⁹⁴ The obvious implication is that there is nothing wrong, from an egalitarian point of view, with unequal distribution of any one good, be it love, money, or intelligence. It is, therefore, essential to Walzer’s argument that the bell curves for the different abilities would indeed be markedly different; otherwise, his would not be a theory of complex equality for he thinks that there is little way to remedy inequalities in each particular sphere: “There is little we can do, in the best of societies, for the man who isn’t loved.”⁴⁹⁵ All that can be hoped for is that the man who buys love is restrained. On Walzer’s view, the aim of egalitarians should not be to achieve equality in any one sphere or in every sphere but to restrict inequalities to their relevant spheres. He wants, “a society in which no human being is master outside his sphere. That is the only society of equals worth having.”⁴⁹⁶ So, the implication is that equality is to be desired if, but only if, the different bell curves happen to balance out overall.

Walzer addresses that concern only in the brief passages I alluded to earlier. He is more worried by the possibility of any one particular sphere coming to dominate. As in *Spheres*, it is the tyranny of money that most troubles him.⁴⁹⁷ In particular, it must be kept separate from the political sphere. For Walzer, political inequality is acceptable only if it results from a process of argument in which bribery has no place. Thus uncontrolled campaign contributions are one of the great evils of American democracy. The difficulty with controlling money is that it is by its nature “convertible,” for it is after all a medium of exchange. Hence the redistribution of wealth is called for and the strongest argument for such redistribution is that “money is convertible outside its sphere.”⁴⁹⁸ That sphere is that of “useful or pleasing” economic goods and services that are not strictly necessities. The only way to acquire such things should be by working for them, but when the value of work is determined not by market conditions but by “the intrinsic value of the work or the individual qualities of the worker.”⁴⁹⁹ Paying people in such a way is not, Walzer argues, a threat to equality unless the enterprising worker becomes a threat to the

political system because of how much money she has amassed. Within the sphere of entrepreneurship, the entrepreneur is “as good a citizen as any other.”⁵⁰⁰

Walzer concludes his article with some brief thoughts on the quota system and on the relative values of freedom and equality. On the former, he argues that quotas would be “unnecessary and inexcusable” in a socialist society but may be unfortunately necessary as a means of unsettling the present class structure.⁵⁰¹ On the latter, he argues that when properly understood “liberty and equality are the two chief virtues of social institutions, and they stand best when they stand together.”⁵⁰² This is a fitting note on which to conclude our consideration of *Radical Principles* because it sums up why Walzer considers himself to be both a democrat and a socialist: democratic freedoms must go hand-in-hand with socialist distribution if we are to be either free or equal or, as it turns out, both.

Regicide and Revolution

Walzer’s introduction to *Regicide and Revolution* is concerned to offer a defense of the trials and executions of Louis XVI and of Charles I. Yet those are just the particular instances of a somewhat broader argument about regicide that Walzer is advancing. His central concern is to distinguish between what he calls “public regicide”⁵⁰³ and the private assassinations that characterized medieval Europe.⁵⁰⁴ He wishes to defend the former on the grounds that it “changes monarchy forever”⁵⁰⁵ and, in “breaking with the myths of the old regime,” becomes “the founding act of the new” democratic regime.⁵⁰⁶ In other words, *Regicide and Revolution*, like *Radical Principles*, is ultimately a defense of democracy, although it does not discuss whether that democracy would be socialist, liberal, or something else. This absence of concern with the outcome of the democratic process is, in part, a product of Walzer’s particularism and a foreshadowing of the argument in *Spheres of Justice* that social justice is dependent on the shared understandings of the community in question. However, we should not be too quick to conclude that Walzer privileges democracy over socialism. In *Radical Principles*, he subverts the traditional assumption that liberals are concerned with procedure and socialists with substance, claiming that the “distinction is wrongheaded” and that “Arguments about procedure are also arguments about the distribution of decision-making power, and this is a substantive matter.”⁵⁰⁷ For Walzer, as we saw, there is a sense in which socialism and democracy require each other, because we can have no real socialism if decisions are not made collectively, and any decision-making process in which the people as a whole make the important decisions will render each decision a part of a larger, inclusive system.

Regicide and Revolution is one argument divided into five stages. Walzer starts by setting out the distinction between the two types of regicide discussed above. In order to illuminate that distinction, he then turns to an examination of the medieval “ideology of kingship”⁵⁰⁸ and explains what was entailed by the belief in the divine right of kings. Walzer takes James VI and I, the father of Charles I, to be the major intellectual exponent of the doctrine and situates his writings as the most coherent defense of divine right.⁵⁰⁹ This is important because, in the view of both Walzer and C. H. McIlwain (the editor of James’s *Political Works*), once the doctrine had been expounded in full, “resistance to the king [became] highly probable.”⁵¹⁰ Increasing awareness of the supposed fact that the king was “somehow godlike,”⁵¹¹ of the naturalness of monarchy, of the two-bodies argument and the implication that kingly power must be absolute,⁵¹² and of the demonization of the king’s counselors that divine right theory necessitated,⁵¹³ all contributed to the vulnerability of kings who claimed to rule by divine right.

Walzer is also at pains to suggest, however, that by the time of James's exposition of the implications of his claim to divine right, many of his subjects no longer believed in the theory regardless of the "pitch" at which it was outlined.⁵¹⁴ As a result, by the 1640s, James's son, Charles I, was vulnerable to a movement that aimed to debunk the myths of monarchy and replace them with proto-democratic imagery.

Walzer then turns in the third section of his introduction to address the problem that confronted the revolutionaries once they had rejected the theory of divine right. The central difficulty was that the king was in both Civil War England and revolutionary France legally inviolable. As Walzer puts it, there

were major differences between English and French kings with regard to their legislative powers, there were none at all with regard to their standing before their own courts. They may or may not have been above the law when it came to making law, but they were **clearly** beyond its (worldly) reach. It was a legal maxim in both England and France that the king could do no wrong: *le roi ne peut pas faire mal*. This principle the revolutionaries were committed to deny, and their denial was a large part of the revolution they made.⁵¹⁵

Section three of the introduction to *Regicide and Revolution* accounts for how the revolutionaries were able to overcome these legal difficulties and try their kings. In both cases, the starting point was to try to establish constitutional limits to the king's power and thereby ensure that their decrees were enacted through the Estates General or Parliament in each case. By dissolving the *parlements*, in Louis's case, and trying to govern without the active assistance of Parliament, as Charles did, each king made himself vulnerable to the charge of tyranny.⁵¹⁶ Once they were labeled tyrants, Louis and Charles could, but only after they had been defeated in the struggle for de facto power, be charged with treason. The irony in this, of course, was that, as kings, their treason was a crime against their own persons.⁵¹⁷ This irony highlights what a "monumental overturn" it was to bring the kings to trial. Indeed, there remained "no basis in *the law* for trying the king, no more in France than in England."⁵¹⁸ As a result, Charles continually refused to recognize the right of Parliament to put him on trial or to offer a plea in response to the charges.⁵¹⁹ Justifying the trials was to require a "revolutionary argument."⁵²⁰

Part four involves a consideration of the basis for that argument, which was in the notion of kingship by contract. Responding to the charge that he was not there by any "lawful authority," the revolutionaries told Charles that Parliament had authority to try him because it represented the people by whom he had been elected king.⁵²¹ The key move, in other words, was to reject the basis of kingship as lying in a right given from another world and to place it in a grant from the people. Theoretically speaking, this was similar to the position of Hobbes, whose *De Cive* had been published in 1642, and whose *Leviathan* (1651) was to repeat the claim that sovereignty originated in a grant from the people. Hobbes, however, firmly insisted that popular sovereignty did not imply that the people had a right to try their sovereign. Such a position was familiar, Walzer argues, among theorists of the mid-17th century in England, especially among the readers of Bradshaw. For Bradshaw, as for those writers to whom he referred, "the king could legitimately be assaulted, even... assassinated; he could not legally be charged or punished."⁵²² According to Walzer, only George Buchanan had, prior to Charles's trial, provided a philosophical account of the legitimacy of putting a monarch on trial.⁵²³

In Walzer's account of what had to happen before kings could be brought to trial that we see another reason for his interest in the topic. Walzer argues that kings could be tried only after the emergence of "the new sense of opposition rectitude which the English Puritans seem first to have introduced into political life. Righteousness is far more important than mere equalitarianism."⁵²⁴ Walzer's argument in *Regicide and Revolution*, then, reiterates the central themes of *The Revolution of the Saints*, in which, as we saw, Puritan zeal was seen to be a key part of the development of a radical politics. I argued earlier that Walzer's interest in regicide was primarily in its role as a debunker of monarchy and herald of the movement towards democracy. In tying in with the radicalism of the Puritans, we see another reason for Walzer to study the topic. Of course, for Walzer, democracy and radicalism are more closely linked than they would be for many other thinkers, because both instantiate political activity on the part of large numbers of people. This is another reason why he is concerned more with process – the involvement of all those who so desire in decision-making procedures – than with the outcome of those procedures.

Walzer spends a considerable amount of time in the fourth and fifth parts of the introduction to *Regicide and Revolution* considering the case put forward for trying and executing Louis XVI. Indeed, the fifth stage of his argument is to defend Louis's execution. Before making this defense, Walzer compares the different revolutionary positions, and notes the conflict between the Girondins, who were "deeply committed to the forms of justice and legality," and the Jacobins, who opposed the trial and argued that Louis should be executed without trial.⁵²⁵ In order to understand Walzer's argument, it is important to note that the Girondins wished to imprison or exile "Louis Capet,"⁵²⁶ as they called the king, so as to give him the rights that any other citizen would receive, while also subjecting him to the same laws as them. The Jacobins, on the other hand, whose argument "had the great advantage of taking royalist ideology seriously" rejected the "fictions of royal citizenship and legal continuity."⁵²⁷ As a result, they saw the king as a public enemy who could never be included in the body of citizens, rather than as a traitor who had committed treason. Walzer notes that, "The idea of treason... depends upon a theory of membership, for only the member of a community can be a traitor to it."⁵²⁸ As St Just argued, the king could not be seen as a member of the body politic once the theory of government by consent had been adopted, because he insisted that he governed without consent. Therefore, he could not be tried because "he [did] not acknowledge or consent to the bonds that make judgment possible."⁵²⁹ The outcome of the dispute – that Louis was both tried and executed – is the result that Walzer sets out to defend.

According to Walzer, it was necessary that Louis be tried in order that the French republic should establish itself as a community governed by law and not by personal authority. Walzer argues that the trial's political justification was that,

The higher right of the republic consists in the sovereignty of the people, a claim that can and often must be asserted against hostile powers... but which has first of all to be asserted... over each individual member of the people itself. It represents a denial of every sort of personal authority except that which derives from the people by election, and it is vindicated against the king only when the king is required to answer to the people like any other member.⁵³⁰

In this stage of the argument, Walzer agrees with the Girondins: if the French republic was to establish itself successfully as a republic and to overcome the legacy of monarchy that was the

purpose of the revolution, Louis must be treated in the same manner as every other French citizen. No body can be inviolable to the law and trying Louis, rather than simply executing him, was the perfect opportunity to demonstrate that. An execution without trial would not entirely have escaped the realm of private assassination, no matter how public the execution was, because it relied on a logic that accepted much of the ideology of kingship.⁵³¹

In an argument that much resembles what Walzer had claimed in “Political Action,” published a year before *Regicide and Revolution*, he goes on to accept that a political defense of the trial is not a moral justification, but argue in favor of the trial nonetheless. In this sense, the trial of Louis is an instance of a dirty hands dilemma: one in which, as we shall see, a certain action must be adopted but nonetheless involves the actor in a moral wrong. As Walzer says,

The trial founds the republic, but it seems at the same time to do a specific injustice to the king. He did not know that his actions were (or might be called) criminal; he never chose to be a traitor, for he never imagined that he might be one; he thought in all good faith that he was inviolable. There is, I think, **nothing to do but accept this criticism...**The judgment of the king was *ex post facto* justice...Such notions [of equality before the law] were entirely alien to the mind of the king...therein lies the unfairness of the trial.⁵³²

In defending Louis’s trial and execution, then, Walzer develops further arguments that he had made previously and was to repeat in the discussion of the supreme emergency in *Just and Unjust Wars*. In political life, for Walzer, certain actions can be demanded by the duties of office or the necessity of saving or establishing the regime, even where those actions conflict with the (correct) moral prescriptions of civilian life. Nevertheless, the actors have in a sense acted wrongly.

Walzer’s argument is that the wrong done to Louis was mitigated both by the unfairness of the old regime rules that he had “in all good faith” lived by – as he notes, Louis’s actions had been considered criminal had anyone else performed them⁵³³ – and by the importance of the trial to the new regime. This is, first, because, “the decision to try the king was also a decision to adopt the formal rules of the judicial process.”⁵³⁴ It was “revolutionary justice” – but not, Walzer insists, “the principles of the terror” – to try the king, but such justice “is defensible whenever it points the way to everyday justice.”⁵³⁵ As the king was tried by regular judicial proceedings, his trial helped to establish the fundamentals of a democratic legal system in France, and this was important enough to **override** whatever rights of the king were violated, even if not to annul those rights.⁵³⁶

The final point worthy of note in *Regicide and Revolution* is Walzer’s justification of the execution of the king. Structurally speaking, it follows the same logic as the justification of his trial: an important public good is deemed sufficient to override a specific injustice. Noting that in both 17th century England and 18th century France, traitors were normally executed, Walzer states that the judges could not really decide on any alternative sentence. However, it is worth remembering that the Girondins had pressed for trial without execution, and that in Walzer’s view the logic of the Jacobin position should have called for detention and then exile. “What, after all, does one do with prisoners of war but detain them for their duration and then return them to their friends and relatives?”⁵³⁷ The problem was that a Louis in exile or a Louis imprisoned would have been a threat to the revolution because of the potential for him to act as a rallying point for counter-revolutionary forces.⁵³⁸ Execution was partially justified as a means of

solving that problem. It was also, as in the case of Charles, a means of expressing “abhorrence” at the crimes of the kings and to embed the democratic ethos more firmly. As Walzer says, “To judge the treason of a king was also to judge kingship... Punishments must have resonances... it is unlikely that either... imprisonment or banishment... would have expressed that extended condemnation of royal treason **and of royalism** that the scaffold successfully symbolized.”⁵³⁹ Given that it is the purpose of Walzer’s text to argue that public regicide is an attack on the ideology of monarchy, it is hardly surprising that he justifies the execution of a king on the grounds that it is an expression of opposition to kingship per se.⁵⁴⁰

To conclude, Walzer’s central purpose in *Regicide and Revolution* is to argue that public regicide is a “renunciation of magical authority and political servitude”⁵⁴¹ and a fundamental part of the movement to a democratic politics. It is this that distinguishes it from private assassination and also, simultaneously, makes it of interest to Walzer. *Regicide and Revolution* echoes the themes of many of Walzer’s other works. It is: a defense of the democratic ethos (like *Radical Principles*); an examination of the moral dilemmas that involvement in politics entails and a defense of overriding rights in cases of particular national importance (as in *Just and Unjust Wars* and in “Political Action”); and it is a continued study of Puritanism as a radical, activist ideology (like *The Revolution of the Saints*). Although the substance of its discussion is of a pair of topics⁵⁴² somewhat removed from the issues in contemporary American and international political life that were Walzer’s main interests in the 1970s, *Regicide and Revolution* is an important text because it provides concrete applications of arguments that are developed elsewhere.⁵⁴³

“Political Action: The Problem of Dirty Hands”

“Political Action” was published in the second volume of *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, the journal that developed out of the Society for Ethical and Legal Philosophy in which Walzer and many of his friends were involved. It was thus only natural that he should write an article in one of the journal’s early editions.⁵⁴⁴ The topic of “Political Action” at first seems somewhat esoteric for Walzer: it is an examination of whether “a man can ever face, or ever has to face, a moral dilemma, a situation where he must choose between two courses of action both of which it would be wrong for him to undertake.”⁵⁴⁵ At once both more abstract and less obviously political than many of Walzer’s writings, his choice of topic requires explanation.⁵⁴⁶ The sense of puzzlement may be exacerbated by the first sentence of the article, in which Walzer says that it grew out of “a symposium on the rules of war which was actually (or at least more importantly) a symposium on another topic.”⁵⁴⁷ That Walzer should in the 1970s have viewed **any** topic as more important than the rules of war may surprise those who see him as being at that stage primarily a just war theorist. That the topic in question should be one of morality is even more curious.

In fact, however, moral dilemmas are for Walzer the political problem par excellence, at least for the democratically elected political representative. They raise the question of the extent to which political leaders must override conventional moral principles and accept as a duty of their job the violation of people’s rights. In other words, moral dilemmas are a problem of particular relevance to political figures and are, in a sense, created by the nature of representative democratic politics. This is why Walzer’s initial references to situations of moral dilemma are to “the literature of political action” and in particular to the Communist leader Hoerderer in Sartre’s *Dirty Hands*.⁵⁴⁸ For Walzer, the moral dilemma is most importantly a problem of political

responsibility and it reflects the impossibility of governing “innocently”. Given that political leaders have a commitment to ensuring the survival of the community of which they are members, they have to do whatever it takes to ensure that community’s ultimate survival. This may require actions that would, were they performed by a private individual, be regarded as great wrongs.⁵⁴⁹ Put this way, we can see that moral dilemmas are a topic of enormous importance for Walzer: indeed, the account of the supreme emergency in *Just and Unjust Wars*, and the justification of the execution of Louis XVI in *Regicide and Revolution*, are really just applications of this general topic.

What, then, is a moral dilemma? Following Sartre, Walzer sees it as a situation in which

a particular act of government (in a political party or in the state) may be exactly the right thing to do in utilitarian terms and yet leave the man who does it guilty of a moral wrong. The innocent man, afterwards, is no longer innocent. If on the other hand he remains innocent, chooses, that is, the “absolutist” side of Nagel’s dilemma, he not only fails to do the right thing (in utilitarian terms), he may also fail to measure up to the duty of his office (which imposes on him a considerable responsibility for consequences and outcomes... The notion of dirty hands derives from an effort to refuse ‘absolutism’ without denying the reality of the moral dilemma.⁵⁵⁰

Popular notions of morality are not, as Hare suggested, simply mistaken, rather when such views are resistant to utilitarian calculations, theorists ought to learn from them. Walzer again resists attempts to base moral principles on abstract philosophizing and insists that the shared understandings of ordinary men and women in a particular culture are what determines how we ought to act. In the case of political leaders, however, those principles may be vitiated by the responsibilities of government. That is when a moral dilemma arises. In choosing to follow the utilitarian calculus, as they must, politicians nonetheless emerge with dirty hands. The dilemma of dirty hands comes to be seen as the first lesson that Machiavelli wishes to teach political leaders who must learn “how not to be good.”⁵⁵¹ This is because politicians may have to get their hands dirty in the mere struggle for power, by for example manipulating the electorate, making private bargains that their supporters would not condone, and lying. According to Walzer, anyone who was unprepared to engage in such action to win an election that “ought” to be won ought not to run for office.⁵⁵²

While getting one’s hands dirty is a feature of campaigning for office, it is more pointedly a feature of the exercise of political power, as Walzer points out by the use of his famous torture example:

consider a politician who has seized upon a national crisis – a prolonged colonial war – to reach for power. He and his friends win office pledged to decolonization and peace; they are honestly committed to both, though not without some sense of the advantages of the commitment...they have no responsibility for the war; they have steadfastly opposed it. Immediately, the politician goes off to the colonial capital to open negotiations with the rebels. But the capital is in the grip of a terrorist campaign, and the first decision the new leader faces is this: he is asked to authorize the torture of a captured rebel leader who knows or probably knows

the location of a number of bombs hidden in apartment buildings around the city.⁵⁵³

The case in question might be seen as a prototype of the supreme emergency. The political leader must, says Walzer, order the torture even though he has repeatedly expressed his genuine belief that torture is always “abominable” during the campaign for office. The rights of the rebel leader not to be tortured must be “overridden” in order to avoid the calamity that would be the detonation of the bombs. Yet Walzer stresses, as he was to in *Just and Unjust Wars*, that when “rules are overridden, we do not talk or act as if they had been set aside, canceled, or annulled. They still stand and have this much effect at least: that we know we have done something wrong even if what we have done was also the best thing to do.”⁵⁵⁴ The use of language here is the same as it would be in the later work, and the idea similar to the acceptance of criticism for violating the rights of Louis XVI.⁵⁵⁵

So, “Political Action” explores key themes of Walzer’s thought. Its original contribution is not just in applying those themes to the general principle of which supreme emergency and regicide are particular instances, or even in specifying that the problem in question is one that applies above all to political leaders. What makes “Political Action” unique in Walzer’s work is the consideration of what ought to be the fate of the political leader with dirty hands. In doing so, he explores three possible utilitarian accounts of the problem, rejecting the first two, which argue that (1) however difficult the choice facing the leader is it cannot be a dilemma and cannot dirty her hands, and (2) that the leader ought to worry about the act “conscientiously” for some time but then to feel “pride in his achievement.”⁵⁵⁶ The third utilitarian account, for which Walzer has qualified sympathy, is that as the rights in question have been overridden and not annulled, the political leader not only feels guilty but also is guilty and his sense of guilt is the right response to his action. Furthermore, without a sense of guilt, political leaders will be inclined to dirty their hands too often, when they should do so only when they have no real choice because of the threat of “imminent and almost certainly disastrous” consequences.⁵⁵⁷

The political leader with dirty hands, then, is guilty and ought to feel guilty. This is why, to give just one example, Walzer accepted as just the British decision to “dishonor” Arthur Harris.⁵⁵⁸ Walzer is not entirely sure whether any further action ought to be taken, but he considers three traditional approaches, which derive respectively from “neoclassical, Protestant, and Catholic perspectives on politics and morality.”⁵⁵⁹ On Walzer’s view, there is some truth in each account.

The first, drawn from Machiavelli, is that the prince must “throw away” his “personal goodness” in the *hope* (but not the certainty, as the overriding actions must be carried out successfully) of winning power and glory. Dirty hands exists as a dilemma because without it, good people would not be prepared to engage in unscrupulous acts for their polity. The problem with this account, on Walzer’s view, is that it does not give any proof of the anguish of the leader and Machiavelli does not specify any penalties for not being good.⁵⁶⁰

The second approach refers again to Weber’s “Politics as a Vocation.” Here there is no doubt that the leader suffers, for she becomes a tragic heroine because the vocation of politics is not divinely ordained and cannot be justified by God. Such a hero makes something akin to a Faustian bargain, and surrenders his soul for the good of his populace. Once again, however, Walzer concludes that the suffering is too private: the leader may be merely hypocritical or masochistic, and her suffering needs to be “socially expressed (for like punishment [suffering]

confirms and reinforces our sense that certain acts are wrong...equally important it sometimes needs to be socially limited.”⁵⁶¹

The final approach, with which Walzer seems most convinced, is drawn from Camus’ *The Just Assassins*. Here the assassins know that they will become criminals and be punished – in fact killed – but take their punishment to “complete the action in which they are engaged: dying, they need make no excuses.”⁵⁶² In other words, a political leader who has dirty hands must be honored for doing good and punished for doing bad. The punishment applies because anyone who committed such an act would be punished.⁵⁶³ Punishment stands in, as it did in *Regicide and Revolution*, for an expression of the importance of applying the law equally to all citizens. It is because there is a punishment that Walzer approves this option, and also because it reestablishes the moral code after it has been overridden, whereas the other two approaches make no explicit provision for its reestablishment.⁵⁶⁴ Dirty hands reflects a moral dilemma precisely because the actor with dirty hands must be both rewarded or honored and punished by society and thus demonstrates that society treats everyone – whether a subject, citizen, or leader – by the same criterion. This is why when the political leader “lies, manipulates, and kills...we must make sure he pays the price.” Reflecting the importance of the moral code, Walzer concludes the essay by stating, “We won’t be able to do that, however, without getting our own hands dirty, and then we must find some way of paying the price ourselves.”⁵⁶⁵

That sentence is a beautiful way to bring “Political Action” to a close and it aptly encapsulates why it is an article of the greatest importance to an understanding of Walzer’s thought. The dirty hands dilemma arises because of the centrality of politics and communal life to our moral existence. We cannot escape involvement in the political process – without a shared life, there is no set of values to live by and many of our most important goods are irretrievably lost. Involvement in politics is motivated by the defense of our way of life but it inevitably leads politicians to engage in actions that conflict with the values we espouse in the course of our lives. In other words, by engaging in politics, we must do things that threaten the very values we engaged in it to protect. So as to demonstrate the importance of those values, we cannot let such a threat go unpunished, and so politicians must sacrifice themselves for the country that they represent. However, the inescapability of the dilemma is confirmed by the fact that the punishment of the politicians must itself be punished, because it too comes into tension with the moral code by suggesting that people be punished for acts they were required to undertake. The cycle of punishment may thus be unending. This is a somber note to end on, but it is in accord with the applications of the dirty hands argument that Walzer was to develop in *Just and Unjust Wars* and in *Regicide and Revolution*. The moral dilemma arises in situations of extreme catastrophe and thus allows morality to be overridden, but the moral code is one of our deepest commitments and so the decision to override it cannot be made without consequences. For these reasons, “Political Action” both generalizes arguments that Walzer was to make elsewhere and adds a crucial reflection on the side effects of the actions that it condones.

“The Moral Standing of States: A Response to Four Critics”

This defense of the principle of non-intervention put forward in *Just and Unjust Wars* was written in 1980 and so might have been considered in the next chapter.⁵⁶⁶ In many ways, however, the article represents a summation of some of Walzer’s key arguments from the 1970s and his last theoretical statement on just war theory for some years.⁵⁶⁷ The article provides a

useful way of tying in the arguments of *Just and Unjust Wars* to those of *Radical Principles and Obligations*, a topic that will be taken up later in this chapter, and so is included here.⁵⁶⁸

The article is Walzer's response to the arguments of Richard Wasserstrom, Gerald Doppelt, Charles Beitz, and David Luban that his theory of the just war is, "despite its putative foundation in a theory of individual rights...ultimately 'statist' in character."⁵⁶⁹ On the view of these authors, Walzer's defense of non-intervention, which he uses to explain "the criminality of aggressive war,"⁵⁷⁰ results in greater protection being offered to states than should be and uses inadequate grounds to defend that protection. In a foreshadowing of the critique of *Spheres of Justice* that maintained that appeal to "shared understandings" as the arbiter of questions of distributive justice was incapable of debunking prejudice and tackling inequality, they claim that Walzer's theory has "conservative implications...it conserves...the authority or sovereignty of illegitimate...tyrannical regimes."⁵⁷¹

The critique thus pushed Walzer into an explanation of his just war theory that shows much more clearly than the book did how and why it is compatible with his domestic theory. In each case, he sees communal integrity as the only means to enable people to live self-determining and flourishing lives. In practical political terms, Walzer takes the state to be for the most part coterminous with the political community. "The Moral Standing of States" enables him to defend that argument too. He does so by countering Beitz's claim that the "pluralist world order [of sovereign states] has already been transcended" with the argument that political "power within a particular community remains the critical factor in shaping the fate of the members."⁵⁷² His evidence for this is that, up to 1980, the political history of Yugoslavia, Cuba, and Iran "suggest strongly that what actually happens within a country is a function, above all, of local political processes."⁵⁷³ Regardless of whether Walzer would still think that the empirical evidence of those countries' experience supports his argument, the theoretical/normative claim that underlies it – that political change can be effective and legitimate only when driven by internal forces – is central to the argument of "The Moral Standing of States."

Walzer's defense of his position starts by embracing the putative charge of conservatism, as he applauds Burke's version of the societal contract that includes "the living, the dead, and those who are yet to be born."⁵⁷⁴ The point, in other words, is that contract theory is to be seen in metaphorical terms. The contract is an expression of a set of shared moral understandings that has developed over generations and will continue to do so, but slowly. The state emerges by the union of people with their government and so long as it continues in existence, outsiders cannot claim to know what is best for the people. Foreigners, on Walzer's view, "are in no position to deny the reality of that union [between people and government because they] don't know enough about its history, and they have no direct experience...of the conflicts and harmonies...that underlie it."⁵⁷⁵ Rather they ought to presume a "fit" between the people and the government and accept that the fit makes the state legitimate. The fit is, Walzer again reaffirms, merely presumptive and the norm of non-intervention not absolute. Without the presumption, however, other states fail to respect the community and the rights of its members to order their internal life as they see fit. Moreover, given that any intervention would have to expect to meet with resistance, states must recognize that the members of the intervened-upon state value their community just as much as do all citizens.

Yet Walzer is keen to embrace only the ascription of conservatism to him. He is adamant that, as a substantive claim, it is incorrect. Rather, he is – once again – a democrat, which in the international context makes him an advocate of collective self-determination. In defending the norm of non-intervention from the charge of conservatism, Walzer draws a bifurcation within the

notion of legitimacy and elaborates on his argument from *Just and Unjust Wars* that a revolution may be justified where an intervention would not be.⁵⁷⁶ According to Walzer, a state may be judged as legitimate or not in two ways. The first measure is the extent to which the government really does fit with the political community and is for the members of the community to judge. If there is no fit, rebellion is justified. The second measure, to be addressed to foreigners, concerns the extent to which the absence of fit is apparent. If it is not obvious that there is no fit, then intervention “usurps the rights of subjects and citizens.”⁵⁷⁷ The two types of legitimacy reflect a distinction between singularity and pluralism in political life and, in so doing, herald the dichotomy between philosophical truth and political process that Walzer notes at the end of the article and expands upon in “Philosophy and Democracy.” Acceptance of the fact that intervention is unjustified if the fit is not obviously absent shows respect for “diversity...communal integrity...different patterns of...political development.”⁵⁷⁸

Walzer also makes the important move of reiterating the exceptions to the norm of non-intervention that he set forth in *Just and Unjust Wars*.⁵⁷⁹ These are, to repeat, that intervention is justified in cases of secession/national liberation, when one party to a civil war has received support from another foreign power, and when a government massacres or enslaves its own citizens.⁵⁸⁰ In responding to his critics, Walzer is also moved to add to the list of cases of legitimate intervention instances in which governments starve their own people.⁵⁸¹ As Walzer notes, once this concession has been made, it is not obvious to what extent his position comes into tension with that of critics such as Luban, who express support for intervention only in the case of defense of “socially basic human rights.”⁵⁸²

Puzzlement over the disagreement leads Walzer to conclude that such critics really wish to expand the list of socially basic rights so as to allow interventions against any repressive government.⁵⁸³ As a result, Walzer is led to a consideration of the fundamental difference between his position and that of those who look on intervention more favorably. The key problem is that of allocating responsibility for infringements of rights. He says,

Rights are in an important sense distributive principles. They distribute decision-making authority. When we describe individual rights, we are assigning to individuals a certain authority to shape their own live, and we are denying that officials, even well-meaning officials, are authorized to interfere. The description of communal rights makes a similar assertion and a similar denial. In the individual case, we fix a certain area for personal choice; in the communal case, we fix a certain area for political choice...it is not the sign of some collective derangement or radical incapacity for a political community to produce an authoritarian regime. Indeed, the history, culture, and religion of the community may be such that authoritarian regimes come...naturally, reflecting a widely shared worldview.⁵⁸⁴

Those critics who wish to protect against intervention only those communities that adopt a particular set of shared institutions, or one of a set of variations on a theme of institutional frameworks, do not apply the equivalent of a principle that would protect the freedom of individuals. Rather, what they seek “would be more like protecting only individuals who had arrived at certain opinions [or] lifestyles.”⁵⁸⁵ Unless we respect political diversity and communal self-determination, then, Walzer thinks that we enforce rights without having the authority to do so because rights can be enforced only “within political communities where they have been

collectively recognized.”⁵⁸⁶ This is why, to come back to a point made above, Walzer thinks that political change is illegitimate if it does not emerge internally.

The final point worthy of note in “The Moral Standing of States” is Walzer’s explanation of why intervention must be ineffective except in the cases he mentions. He illustrates this point by drawing on the Sandinista struggle in Nicaragua. On Walzer’s account of the situation, had there been a foreign intervention during the first campaign, the rebels would not have “negotiated a significant broadening of the revolutionary ‘front.’”⁵⁸⁷ Yet it was in the negotiations in question that the rebels had to outline in detail their plans for the new regime. The upshot is that an earlier intervention would have resulted in a regime determined by the interests or ideologies of the state(s) that intervened and not by the Nicaraguans. Such an intervention would “have violated the rights of Nicaraguans as a group to shape their own political institutions and the right of individual Nicaraguans to live under institutions so shaped.”⁵⁸⁸ This position highlights the argument of “The Moral Standing of States” that enforcing democracy is ultimately undemocratic insofar as it fails to respect a people’s right to collective self-determination.⁵⁸⁹

Such a viewpoint might seem paradoxical in many other writers yet it captures perfectly why “The Moral Standing of States” is an important addition to the Walzer oeuvre. The article explains exactly how just war theory, which purports to be about the defense of human rights, is a good “fit” with complex equality, with its adherence to shared values as a yardstick of justice. Walzer is at pains to explain that the idea that human rights are in conflict with upholding the rights of political communities is for him chimerical. Many of our most valuable rights are ones that go hand in hand with the life of our political community and so many less important rights have to be violated before it is right for someone else to deny us the right to communal autonomy. So, the human rights advocate can hold hands with the “communitarian.” Likewise, the article demonstrates how the radical democrat and the non-interventionist can be reconciled and does so in a way that echoes *Radical Principles*. Walzer explains that, “the disagreement [between him and his critics]...has to do with the respect we are prepared to accord and the room we are prepared to yield to the **political process itself**...with the range of outcomes we are prepared to tolerate.”⁵⁹⁰ As in *Radical Principles*, procedure takes precedence over outcomes. This is the crucial element of Walzer’s account of political practice and its relationship to political theory, to which we now turn.

IV

This concluding section ties together the arguments of the pieces summarized in section III, as well as Walzer’s other writings, so as to provide an account of the key themes of Walzer’s writing in the 1970s and the linkages between both between works in that decade and between those works and what Walzer had argued previously and was to go on to argue. I will draw out some of the points made in the discussion of particular texts so as to emphasize the elements of continuity and repetition in them. Briefly summarized, these can be taken to be the theme of context as a matter for concern in political theory and the relationship between theory and practice, that of socialism and its relationship with liberalism and with conservatism, and the nature of politics as a realm of immorality and filled with moral dilemmas. My basic argument is that the defense of democratic activity and political participation is what unites all of Walzer’s work, explaining his commitment to such disparate themes as non-intervention, the legitimacy of public regicide, and the privileging of procedure over outcome. In this way, and perhaps only in

this way, *Just and Unjust Wars* can be seen as being compatible with *Radical Principles* and with “Political Action,” and *Regicide and Revolution* as part of the same research project as “The Moral Standing of States.” These themes will be explored in skeletal form, as the fuller fleshing out of many of them awaits the discussion of *Spheres of Justice*. Furthermore, they are in most cases simply collating points that I have made earlier in the chapter.

The defense of democracy is plainly central to *Radical Principles*. Even someone who has just read the title would be aware of Walzer’s commitment to viewing himself as a democrat. Yet it is also, as I have pointed out, a key part of the argument of every one of Walzer’s other major texts of the era. The doctrine of non-intervention, which undergirds the just war theory of *Just and Unjust Wars* and which is reiterated even more firmly in “The Moral Standing of States,” is important to Walzer because he views it as the right of every community to decide for itself how it wishes to run its common life. Strictly speaking, this is a defense of pluralism rather than democracy, as it requires Walzer to argue that non-democratic regimes are not to be intervened in unless they violate human rights on a massive scale by massacring or enslaving their citizens.⁵⁹¹ However, the fundamental principle that is being defended is similar in each case. Walzer defends pluralism mostly because it is a reflection of individual human being’s right to exercise collective self-determination, to be part of a community that decides together how to live and allocate power and resources. Only by doing this can communities become ones of free and equal citizens. Given that, in *Radical Principles*, Walzer states that democratic socialism is committed to upholding in tandem the values of freedom and equality, which in Walzer’s view work best when they work together, we can see that the core commitments of both *Radical Principles* and *Just and Unjust Wars* are the same ones: to the freedom of political communities and the equality of the citizens of those communities.

Regicide and Revolution is also an indirect espousal of democracy, although admittedly in this case less is said about social equality. Public regicide was, the reader may recall, valued by Walzer because it represented an attack upon the mysteries of kingship. In place of a depiction of society as a body that must be governed by one head, public regicide sought to establish a republic. To that extent, it too is egalitarian, because the objection to kingship is an objection to the idea that one man or woman can lay claim to a divine right to rule over other people simply by virtue of their birth. For this reason, private assassination is of no interest to Walzer whatsoever. Indeed, it may even be destructive insofar as it enables the king to continue to be viewed as a somehow exalted being. This is why Walzer starts *Regicide and Revolution* by saying that it is important “not to tell sad stories of the death of kings.”⁵⁹² The key point is that Walzer does not just say that it is important to talk about public regicide. He also claims that it is important not to talk about any other kind of regicide, as that might glorify the monarchical system.

Finally, although “Political Action” does not advance an argument in favor of democracy, it does operate under the assumption that democratic political leaders may face moral dilemmas more acutely than any other figure. This is because of the tension between their responsibility to defend their state and the ordinary requirements of morality. It too, then, is an examination of an important issue in democratic thought. Given that, as I have argued, the dirty hands dilemma is the general case of which the supreme emergency of just war theory and the execution of deposed kings are instances, the article is intimately linked to two of Walzer’s most important works of the decade and an importantly theoretical undergirding for those works.

So, commitment to democracy and to public involvement in the decision-making process by which the common life is shaped is central to each of Walzer’s major works written in the

1970s. His other principal commitment is manifestly to socialism. Here there is an even greater seeming paradox in that Walzer embraces the label of conservative when it is applied to his just war theory and in that many of his democratic commitments have an ambiguous relationship to liberalism. In particular, he notably argues in favor of proceduralism over concern for outcomes, something that by his own admission is generally taken to be a liberal trope. Surely Walzer cannot be a socialist, a liberal, and a conservative? The answer is, of course, that he does not see himself as being all those things, yet he also does not wish the lines to be drawn between them as starkly as they often are. One of his repeated refrains in *Radical Principles* is that the American left must be more united and less prone to sectarian infighting. This reiterates one of the major themes of *Political Action* at the start of the decade. This means that democratic socialists and left-leaning liberals must be able to form working coalitions both in movement politics and within the Democrat Party nationally. If that were to happen, mutually interchange of ideas would undoubtedly increase and Walzer's argument that procedures should matter to socialists would seem less outlandish. Furthermore, his belief is that socialism and democracy are essentially flip sides of the same coin. Democracy is first and foremost a matter of procedure – what makes a political system democratic is not that particular decisions are made, but how they are made – so it should not be surprising that a democratic socialist is concerned with procedures. Finally, Walzer's acceptance of the conservatism tag is meant flippantly. It highlights the important point that, to many liberals, the arguments of conservatives and of socialists overlap more than either of the latter two groups would warrant. But it also reflects Walzer's disdain for the notion that patriotism and pride in one's country should be prerogatives of the political right. On his account, involvement in political decision-making is one of the most important rights that an individual can have.

Walzer's writings in the 1970s do, then, form a coherent whole. We will discuss in the next chapter how *Just and Unjust Wars* relates to *Spheres of Justice* and whether they can be reconciled. I want to conclude this chapter by considering the ways in which Walzer's thought in the 1970s continues the earlier themes. Clearly, the influence of the Society for Ethical and Legal Philosophy loomed increasingly large in Walzer's thought as the decade proceeded. *Just and Unjust Wars*, despite its insistence on working the argument through a series of real historical cases – is plainly a work in normative moral theory of the sort carried out by Rawls, Nozick and Nagel.

Yet the influence of the other traditions mentioned in the previous chapter should not be thought to have disappeared from Walzer's work. Historicized idealism such as that which Walzer learned about from Beer was important in the writing of *Regicide and Revolution*, with its emphasis on the ways in which monarchical and democratic systems influence the thought of those who live under them. It may well also have shaped Walzer's decision to use historical rather than hypothetical examples in *Just and Unjust Wars*. It cannot be doubted, however, that Walzer was less the historicized idealist in the 1970s than he had been previously. *The Revolution of the Saints* bears the hallmark of Harvard's government department very clearly. By the time of *Obligations*, Walzer was already starting to consider questions more in line with the research program of normative political theory and later in the decade his methodology started to imbibe some normative influences too. This should not be surprising. Just as a graduate student at Harvard in the 1950s was very likely to be influenced by the idealism of many of the contemporary faculty, so a professor at Harvard in the 1970s would have had to work hard to avoid the influence of Rawlsian thought.

American-style radical democracy was, in the 1970s, a tradition that Walzer more clearly worked within. *Radical Principles* is very much the book of a *Dissent* contributor, and not just because the book is dedicated to the “comrades” of that magazine or because many of the articles were published originally in either *Dissent* or the *New Republic*. Walzer’s concerns in the book are first and foremost the concerns of a left-wing political activist in the US in the 1960s and 1970s. He takes up such matters as the student uprisings, the anti-war movement, Watergate, the causes of the rise of neo-Conservatism, and the legitimacy of using violence in political protest. Yet the influence of this tradition can be seen in other work too. *Just and Unjust Wars*, although very different in tone from the sorts of work that Walzer would have written with Irving Howe and others on *Dissent*, drew its inspiration from Walzer’s involvement in the anti-war movement. *Regicide and Revolution* shows a concern with the legitimacy of violence in a revolutionary movement and with the question of how best to establish a democratic regime. Even “Political Action” takes as one of its guiding themes the question of what it is permissible to do in promotion of a revolutionary cause. There is no doubting the fact that Walzer remained committed to many of the same issues that he had been involved with as an activist in previous decades. However much his critics called him a conservative, a communitarian, or a statist, Walzer was in fact a democratic socialist concerned primarily to promote equality and freedom from oppression.

Finally, Walzer’s Judaism remained influential in the 1970s, even though he did little important work directly on Jewish themes. That was to change in the 1980s with the writing of *Exodus and Revolution* and even more so thereafter with Walzer’s involvement in the volumes of *The Jewish Political Tradition*. Even in the 1970s, however, Judaism was clearly important to Walzer. Many of the historical examples in *Just and Unjust Wars* relate to incidents in Jewish history or to the state of Israel’s conflicts with its neighbors. Moreover, as I pointed out, in key places in the book, he uses language drawn directly from Jewish sources, the most notable occasion being in the critique of skepticism in international affairs.

One change in Walzer’s thought was in the emphasis of his writings on political action. In the 1960s, he had focused very much on involvement in the movement. Perhaps partly as a result of being older, in the 1970s Walzer still wrote about issues of interest to left-wing politics but the influence of his own involvement seems less apparent. Now he was more concerned with the ways in which political theory must follow political practice. This is of course an old idealist concern. For Walzer, it is important that moral reasoning stay grounded in a world understood by the community as a whole. Political theory has never been for Walzer a branch of philosophy closely related to logic or to epistemology. Rather, theorizing about both politics and morality is a matter of being able to persuasively explain how our commitments fit together and how the best understanding of our underlying commitments can force us to change more marginal concerns. As this was to become a major theme of both *Spheres of Justice* and *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, which are arguably Walzer’s two major books of the 1980s, this point demonstrates not only that Walzer’s thought in the 1970s was in many ways a continuation of his earlier work but also that it foreshadowed his later concerns. As a result, it is a fitting note on which to conclude consideration of Michael Walzer’s works in the 1970s. In the next chapter, I move on to discuss the period between 1980 and 1985.

Chapter 3: Arrival at the Institute 1980-1985

I

In 1980, Michael Walzer turned 45 and entered into the crucial stage of his career by leaving Harvard to join the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. In his second stint in New Jersey, Walzer had greater freedom to develop his ideas, as his position at the Institute did not carry with it the teaching responsibilities that he had had at either Harvard or Princeton Universities. Walzer remained at the Institute for the rest of his academic career until his recent retirement and his written output throughout this period reflected the emphasis on research that his position permitted. In 1981, for example, Walzer published “Philosophy and Democracy,” his first article in *Political Theory*, the flagship journal of contemporary Anglo-American work in the discipline,⁵⁹³ a contribution to Peter Brown and Henry Shue’s book on the autonomy that nation-states have over their boundaries and a response to the critics of his position,⁵⁹⁴ as well as three major pieces of work for the *New Republic*⁵⁹⁵ and one each for *Dissent*⁵⁹⁶ and for *Parameters*⁵⁹⁷. Meanwhile, he continued work on *Spheres of Justice*, which on its publication in 1983 was soon seen as Walzer’s major contribution to the debate on distributive justice then raging among political theorists. In 1975, a similar period before the publication of *Just and Unjust Wars*, Walzer published just two pieces of work that were 10 pages in length between them.⁵⁹⁸

The increased productivity that Walzer’s position at the Institute enabled is one reason why this chapter considers a 5-year-period rather than the ten of the previous one, but it is not the most important. After all, both *Just and Unjust Wars* and *Radical Principles* were published in the previous five years and although the latter is made up of articles published over the years preceding 1980, each is a significant contribution to Walzer’s oeuvre. It would not be correct to say that Walzer’s work in the late 1970s was not voluminous. I have chosen to consider the first half of the 1980s separately for various other reasons. First, as I argued earlier, one of my major contentions in this thesis is that, contra Brian Orend’s claim, *Spheres of Justice* is both a more significant and a more neglected work than is *Just and Unjust Wars*. In this chapter, I will advance the claim that the early 1980s was when Walzer first started to advance the position that is uniquely his and that produces his synthesis of the different intellectual traditions that I discussed as influences on him in his earlier career. Only in this light can Walzer’s “communitarianism” be understood. I will take that communitarianism to be the product of working out various dilemmas that emerged for Walzer when the radical democracy of Irving Howe and his “comrades” on *Dissent* were brought into conversation with the very different egalitarianism of John Rawls and the liberal members of the analytic tradition. To put the same point slightly differently, communitarianism is what emerged when Walzer tried to reconcile his commitments to a form of socialism and to democratic participation – to “social democracy,” for short hand – with an uncomfortable but not hostile acquaintance with rights-based liberalism.⁵⁹⁹ As *Spheres of Justice* is both the first and the major theoretical statement of this position, it is crucial for an understanding of Walzer’s work as a whole.

A related set of reasons for considering the first half of the 1980s on their own is that doing so enables us to understand Walzer’s work in the late 1970s better in retrospect and looks forward to such works as *Interpretation and Social Criticism* and *The Company of Critics* in the late 1980s. In this chapter, I will attempt to explain how *Spheres of Justice* and *Just and Unjust Wars* are compatible with each other despite their seemingly opposite approaches to the question

of human rights and show how *Spheres of Justice*, as Walzer points out, is in many ways a more unified and theoretically developed version of the argument of *Radical Principles*.⁶⁰⁰ So, in a sense, this chapter is not simply about the first half of the 1980s but an oblique conclusion to the consideration of Walzer's work from the latter half of the 1970s. Likewise, many of the themes discussed in the next chapter will build on methodological and substantive concerns first explicated here. This is especially so on the question of the nature of political theory. What I shall in chapter 4 call Walzer's "critical interpretivism" receives its most detailed theoretical defense in *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, but, like *The Company of Critics*, *Spheres of Justice* is in many ways a practical exemplar of how to write political theory in a way that is both interpretive and critical.

The final reasons for taking the first half of the 1980s separately from the second half is that doing so helps us to see in sharper focus how some of Walzer's earlier concerns continued even while he moved closer to the Anglo-American mainstream in political theory. Alongside *Spheres of Justice* and contributions to *Political Theory* such as "Philosophy and Democracy" and "Liberalism and the Art of Separation,"⁶⁰¹ Walzer worked in this period on *Exodus and Revolution*, a work that owes a great deal to Walzer's early research on Puritanism and foreshadows his late career interest in the Jewish political tradition. From 1992, Walzer began publishing articles in academic journals on such topics as "The Idea of Holy War in Ancient Israel" and "The Legal Codes of Ancient Israel," a research project that has recently come to full flower in the volumes of *The Jewish Political Tradition*⁶⁰² and in *Law, Politics, and Morality in Judaism*⁶⁰³. Walzer did little work on this topic in the second half of the 1980s, but *Exodus and Revolution* is evidence of the longstanding nature of his academic interest in Jewish, as well as in revolutionary, history. It is also, as we shall see, in many ways a sequel to *Regicide and Revolution* and thus combines Walzer's interests in Judaism and in revolution. It is important to note, therefore, that Walzer's research on distributive justice sat alongside the continuation of his work on many of the themes of the first two chapters. Indeed, even in *Spheres of Justice* and in "Philosophy and Democracy" much of the argument involves a commitment to citizen involvement in political life, and a rejection of philosophical dominance over democracy, that is reminiscent of *Political Action* a decade earlier.

I have concentrated at length on the reasons for dividing the 1980s up partly because those reasons will form the backbone of the argument of this chapter. Before we see why that is so, let me conclude this introduction by explaining the structure of the chapter. I start by outlining the arguments of what I take to be Walzer's five key works of the early 1980s, which are "Political Decision-Making and Political Education,"⁶⁰⁴ "Philosophy and Democracy," *Spheres of Justice*, "Liberalism and the Art of Separation," and *Exodus and Revolution*.⁶⁰⁵ I move on to consider the major themes in Walzer's writing during the period, which I take to be: pluralism, both in terms of the "spheres" of social life and the relativity of justice; democracy and political participation, the nature of political theory and the role of the philosopher; the meaning of complex equality; membership; the relationship between liberalism, socialism, and social democracy; and the extent to which Walzer is meaningfully seen as a communitarian. Finally, I give an account of the historical development of Walzer's thought in the early 1980s. As hinted at above, I argue that this was when Walzer produced his own position that synthesized the intellectual traditions that had influenced him. Although the School for Ethical and Legal Philosophy was increasingly dominating Walzer's research concerns, Walzer's relationship with the intellectual tradition of the School was always uneasy and he never cut his

ties with the other traditions. I conclude that his communitarianism is the result of seeking to reconcile his liberalism with his democratic socialism.

II

1. “Political Decision-Making and Political Education”

This essay appears in a collection of articles on the relationship between political theory and political education that Melvin Richter, then of the City University of New York and Hunter College, edited in 1980. Other contributors to the book include Bernard Williams, Charles Taylor, J.G.A. Pocock, Sheldon Wolin, Ronald Dworkin, and Allan Bloom. Walzer’s inclusion in the list is thus a sign of his status within the field by 1980.

Although education was the topic of one of the essays in *Radical Principles*, it may seem somewhat distant from Walzer’s other research on justice in the early 1980s. In fact, however, his contribution to Richter’s book is an important foreword to “Philosophy and Democracy” and an early statement of his on the subject of democratic participation, which was to loom so large in his thought later in the decade. Briefly stated, Walzer argues in “Political Decision-Making” that citizens in a democratic state need an education that prepares them for the decisions that they will have to make as a citizen. In particular, he wants to consider the way in which “vicarious decision-making” affects the relationship between citizens and leaders.⁶⁰⁶ As Walzer points out, among the forms of involvement available to democratic citizens is that of assessing the decisions of leaders. Citizens do not merely vote, but are mentally engaged in such decisions as “deciding whether or not to recognize Communist China, maintain troops in Europe, establish price and wage controls.”⁶⁰⁷ Such “second-guessing” of democratic leaders is “crucial to our reflective judgments of their conduct.”⁶⁰⁸ As a result, the education of democratic citizens ought, on Walzer’s view, to enable citizens to make such “anticipative and retrospective” decisions, or to reflect on the decisions made by political leaders. In other words, it should help all citizens to learn how to make political decisions or to formulate policies.⁶⁰⁹

In order to explain how this could be done, Walzer draws a distinction between what he calls “realist” and “moralist” models of decision-making.⁶¹⁰ This distinction is somewhat akin to that which he draws in *Just and Unjust Wars* when offering a critique of the realist tradition in international relations. Realists, Walzer says, think of decision-making in utilitarian terms: it is “essentially a matter of maximizing values,”⁶¹¹ where the value of the goal is taken to be either given or not a matter of rational deliberation. As in *Just and Unjust Wars*, Walzer points out that realism cannot escape from the “untidiness” of the moral world and avoid such decisions as whether to pursue national security at the expense of individual liberty. Therefore, decision-making cannot be divorced from the making of a “moral choice.” Citizens must learn not just how to “reckon,” but also how to “worry.”⁶¹² He concludes that if “we are educating decision-makers, we need to teach them something about moral choice.”⁶¹³

Walzer claims that teaching people how to make moral choice is best done on a casuistic model, where casuistry means, “applying the general rules of . . . morality to particular instances which disclose special circumstances or conflicting duties.”⁶¹⁴ In other words, it means thinking about difficult cases in which moral rules sit in tension with each other and no easy decision can be made. According to Walzer, the best example of such an education currently available is in law schools. In the law, lawyers act as he suggests citizens should: they “prejudge and second-guess [judges’] decisions.”⁶¹⁵ Like lawyers, citizens ought to be trained in a similar way, because

“they are future political actors and real or vicarious decision-makers.”⁶¹⁶ In both the law and politics, principles stand to decisions in a relationship that resembles an ongoing circle: “principles determine decisions, decisions in turn modify and refine principles.”⁶¹⁷ So, teachers of politics ought to adopt an approach similar to that taken in law schools and help students practice “an intense and disciplined form of the anticipations and retrospections that are a normal part of democratic politics.”⁶¹⁸ If that were to happen, leaders would look at universities differently: they would be seen as both training grounds for future politicians and places in which to seek guidance when making decisions. Walzer concludes his article by stating that his model of political education would benefit not only citizens but leaders. Although “political leaders would be as lonely as ever when they made their decisions, they would at the same time, like judges, find themselves in good company...there should be a world of democratic reference shaping the moral choices of our political leaders, generated by the anticipations and retrospections of their fellow citizens.”⁶¹⁹

“Political Decision-Making” is an important article in the development of Walzer’s thought for various reasons. First, it demonstrates ongoing interest in the nature of difficult moral choice and shows that the themes of “Dirty Hands” and *Just and Unjust Wars* were by no means forgotten after those pieces. In particular, his discussion of how citizens might retrospectively judge the action of an army lieutenant who violated the rights of prisoners of war so as not to endanger the safety of the unit could have been drawn straight out of those works.⁶²⁰ Secondly, it shows how he continued to try to link political theory – and, indeed, the study of politics in general – to involvement in political life. Indeed, the article calls into question whether there can meaningfully be said to be a difference between study and practicing politics, much as *Political Action* did. Finally, it provides an important practical example of the sort of participation in a democracy that Walzer advocates in later works in the 1980s. Although Walzer accepts the impossibility in a large industrial state of actually adopting the “Aristotelian ideal” of ruling and being ruled in turn, in his view a mental equivalent of that should take place as citizens deliberate upon the actions of their leaders.⁶²¹ This means that when in “Philosophy and Democracy,” Walzer insists that democratic decisions must have priority over philosophical reflection, he does not mean to pooh-pooh philosophy. Rather, in a sense, he takes political and moral philosophy to be the responsibility of all the citizens and not just of a trained elite.

2. “Philosophy and Democracy”

Walzer’s first article in *Political Theory* is at once a signal of his entry into the mainstream of American political theory and its preoccupation with principles of justice and a reminder of his disagreements with many of the tenets of the mainstream tradition. Starting with the claim that, “The prestige of political philosophy is very high these days,”⁶²² Walzer proceeds in the article to argue that, in many ways, political philosophy should not have so much influence over economists, lawyers, and public policy formers as it does in so far as it claims an authority for its principles that is not derived from popular mandate. It is important to note that “Philosophy and Democracy” does not purport to call into question the possibility of “objective truths.”⁶²³ In this case, at least, Walzer does not intend to advance a skeptic’s position: on the contrary, he wants “to accept [the] possibility” of philosophers providing definitive answers to questions about the best formation of a political order before asking “what it means for democratic politics.” In short, the article discusses “the standing of the philosopher in a democratic society.”⁶²⁴

As I have hinted at, Walzer's conclusion will ultimately be that, even if philosophers can discover the truth about politics, they "have no special rights in the political community" because in "the world of opinion, truth is indeed another opinion, and the philosopher is only another opinion-maker."⁶²⁵ Few contemporaries of Walzer attached much weight to Plato's distinction – from book V of *The Republic* – between truth or knowledge and opinion, but the conclusion is doubtless intended to provoke. After all, he starts the article by following Wittgenstein in defining a philosopher as someone who is "not a citizen of any community of ideas," but is, rather, "an outsider" whose thought "systematically" places her outside the community of citizenship.⁶²⁶ Moreover, Walzer sees the detachment of the political philosopher as being purposive: "the philosopher detaches himself from the community of ideas in order to found it again...He withdraws and returns."⁶²⁷ Insisting that the philosopher is no more than "another opinion-maker" might seem to attempt to undercut the whole philosophical enterprise.⁶²⁸

Yet Walzer is not seeking to undermine political *theory*. That is why he deliberately talks of "political philosophy" in his first sentence, which might otherwise seem a strange way to refer to the discipline in a journal entitled *Political Theory*. Walzer's argument in "Philosophy and Democracy," as later in *Interpretation and Social Criticism* – of which this article is in many ways a precursor – is in essence that political philosophy does not exhaust political theory. What he seeks to advocate is the "engagement of sophists, critics, publicists, and intellectuals" as "an alternative to the detachment of philosophers."⁶²⁹ The figures that Walzer identifies himself with do – or did – not regard themselves as strangers; rather, "their teaching drew upon, was radically dependent upon, the resources of a common membership."⁶³⁰ Hence sophistry, unlike philosophy, is not "authoritarian."⁶³¹ It is for this reason that Walzer supports it as the preferable approach to political theory in a democracy.⁶³²

For Walzer, the claims to truth made by philosophers are incompatible with the legitimate claims to rule that can be made in a democracy. This claim is not a knowledge-based one. Rather, the claim is that "[the people] are the subjects of the law, and if the law is to bind them as free men and women, they must also be its makers."⁶³³ Taking this to be the Rousseauian project, Walzer takes himself to be working out its implications. Like *Obligations*, then, "Philosophy and Democracy" makes a contractualist argument of a particular kind. The claim is, in essence, that democratic citizens have "a right to do what they think is right" even if they do not know "the right thing to do."⁶³⁴ Now, certainly, there will not be consensus among the citizens as to what is right, which means that the possibility of "overriding" the claims of particular aspects of social life is ever-present, but, as Walzer was to note in "Liberalism and the Art of Separation," that "is the unavoidable risk of democracy."⁶³⁵ The democracy to which Walzer is committed is in many ways a more undiluted one than that of the liberals with whom he is so frequently contrasted – on occasions it may seem to be a majoritarian form – and this is what makes the contrast between philosophical and democratic claims so stark in his analysis.

That this is so can be seen in Walzer's analysis of three possible restraints on democratic decision-making. The first two, that the people's will must be general and that that will is inalienable and indestructible,⁶³⁶ are relatively unproblematic, because Walzer accepts them. However, he believes that the philosophical approach that he is offering a critique of will insist on a third restraint on democracy, namely that "the people must will what is right."⁶³⁷ Walzer is not prepared to accept this restraint. Even if there were "a single set...of correct or just laws," the people would have a right to implement a different set of laws. As Walzer puts it, "it is a feature of democratic government that the people have a right to act wrongly...within some area."⁶³⁸ That means that, for example, even if a philosophical account of justice were able to prove

definitively that some set of redistributive principles – say Rawls’s two principles of justice – were “right”, that would not mean that those principles ought to be implemented. They should be implemented if and only if the people wish them to be implemented. Walzer claims that, “it is not at all obvious that a policy’s rightness is the right reason for implementing it. It may only be the right reason for hoping that it will be implemented.”⁶³⁹ Knowledge of what decision would be right does not give one a right to make that decision.

Walzer’s defense of this claim is founded on a rejection of the idea that “it can never be right to do wrong...once we know or can know what is right.” He rejects that view on the grounds that it is also “an argument about the distribution of political power” in so far as implementation of reviews of popular decision-making would have to be carried out by a particular group of people who would thus be empowered on the grounds of their greater knowledge of the truth.⁶⁴⁰ Walzer takes the US Supreme Court to be an example of such a group, and argues that the tension between democracy and judicial review “directly parallels” that between democracy and philosophy. However, it is less deep because judges normally exploit the tension only in the name of a particular philosophy and otherwise “are supposed to be wise in the ways of a particular legal tradition, which they share with their old...associates.”⁶⁴¹ Judges, unlike philosophers, do not generally claim or seek detachment from the democratic community of which they are a part. The power given to the members of the Supreme Court is, on Walzer’s analysis, in tension with democracy, but is less troubling than thought experiments such as Rawls’s “original position” or Habermas’s “ideal speech situation,” which “liberate” their attendees from the community of citizens.⁶⁴²

Walzer’s example of a sphere in which democratic deliberation is at odds with philosophical reflection or judicial review is that of “rights”.⁶⁴³ When philosophers advocate the defense of a particular set of rights, they “propose a decision procedure for judges modeled on that of the ideal commonwealth” and not of the actual state.⁶⁴⁴ If judges follow the advice of philosophers, then, when necessary, they must “preempt or overrule legislative decisions...it is here that the tension between philosophy and democracy takes material form.”⁶⁴⁵ As Walzer points out, the greater the list of judicially enforced rights, the smaller the list of rights given to the people as collective decision makers.⁶⁴⁶ If this is so, however, then the tension between philosophy and democracy could be restated as a tension between individually- and collectively-held rights. Why must the latter be privileged? Walzer’s first reason foreshadows the language of *Spheres of Justice*: judicial review that is intended to enforce the “right” decision represents a narrowing of the “boundaries” between different areas of “democratic space.”⁶⁴⁷ As he might have said a couple of years later, if the pluralism of social life is to be respected in political life, the boundaries between different areas – what he later called “spheres” – must be maintained. The second reason is that a list of rights would limit future democratic decision-making. The third is that such a list would give far too much decision-making power to the courts.⁶⁴⁸ Such a list might be legitimate within, for example, the sphere of welfare, but only if the people could “disestablish” the “new authorities” if they felt “oppressed by them.”⁶⁴⁹ The individual rights advocated by philosophers operate as once-and-for-all limits on debate in ways that democratic decision-making does not and it depoliticizes such decisions, yet “the political arena [is] where they properly belong.”⁶⁵⁰

In the last paragraph, we got a glimpse of how “Philosophy and Democracy” foreshadows much of Walzer’s later work on distributive justice. In the final pages of the article, this foreshadowing looms even more clearly. Here Walzer draws a distinction between the “particular and pluralist” nature of “political knowing” and the “universalist and singular” thing

that is “philosophical knowing.”⁶⁵¹ As anyone who has seen the cover of *Spheres of Justice* knows, Walzer is a committed pluralist. So, his final reason for privileging democracy over philosophy is that the former allows plurality of social forms in ways that the latter does not. There “is only one original position,”⁶⁵² and only one philosophical truth, so there is only one or a very limited number of communities that can be structured in accordance with philosophical truth. On the other hand, political democracies are almost limitlessly varied in their character because of the myriad variations in history, tradition, and culture between each democracy.

So, in “Philosophy and Democracy,” Walzer concludes with a “defense of pluralism” that operates as a precursor to that of *Spheres of Justice*. He insists that “constrained pluralists” are not really pluralists but merely people who like variety.⁶⁵³ And he argues that “most people” who “are inside their own communities, and [who] value their own opinions and conventions” are drawn to pluralism “through an act of empathy and identification, recognizing that other people have feelings like their own.”⁶⁵⁴ Even if they are committed to a particular set of individual rights, they will worry about enforcing such rights in communities that do not see those rights as traditional, because they will not want to override such traditions and because they value the democratic process more than “the hypothetical experience of abstract men and women.”⁶⁵⁵ Such people, says Walzer, “will have some difficulty understanding why the hypothetical experience of abstract men and women should take precedence over their own history.”⁶⁵⁶ It is for this reason that, even if the hypothetical experience of such people leads to a philosophical truth, that truth should not be politically authoritative unless its holder is able to convince others democratically of it. The philosopher is entitled to their truth but only in so far as that truth is another opinion.

“Philosophy and Democracy” is a key article of Walzer’s both because it symbolizes his involvement with the analytic tradition and the tensions between him and that tradition and because it anticipates the arguments of many later works in the 1980s. In “Philosophy and Democracy” we see early examples of the commitment to pluralism and diversity of *Spheres of Justice*, of the favoring of democratic decision-making over a pre-set map of the political world of “Liberalism and the Art of Separation,” and of the advocacy of interpreting a community’s values as being the task of the political theorist – rather than inventing or discovering new principles – of *Interpretation and Social Criticism*.

3. *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality*

The argument of *Spheres of Justice* is so complex that any account of it that does it justice would take a book in itself. As much of the thematic section of this chapter – and, indeed, of later chapters – will be devoted to a discussion of the book, all that I offer here is a bare bones account of the argument intended to help readers new to Walzer to navigate their way through the chapter.

Spheres takes as its starting point the claim that “simple equality” cannot be implemented in any society in which people are left any sort of freedom of action whatsoever. Indeed, any sort of organization at all will result in a departure from equality “literally understood.” As Walzer points out, “equality of that sort won’t survive the first meeting of the new members. Someone will be elected chairman; someone will make a strong speech and persuade us all to follow his lead. By the end of the day we will have begun to sort one another out.”⁶⁵⁷ The influence of Robert Nozick, with whom Walzer taught a class at Harvard called “Capitalism and Socialism” out of which *Spheres of Justice* grew, is evident. In *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, Nozick claimed

that equality and freedom were incompatible because a regime of equality would require refusing to allow people such simple pleasure as paying someone to let them watch them play basketball. In certain ways, the task of *Spheres of Justice* is to defend equality against that claim and to put forward the position that exchanges such as that are, in a just society, not incompatible with equality. In making that claim, Walzer advances the theory of “complex equality”. In complex equality, people are equal so long as inequalities in one area – or sphere – of social life do not spill over into other spheres of social life.⁶⁵⁸ Within each sphere, inequalities will continue; however, so long as each sphere is kept within certain boundaries, people will not, overall, be unequal. Thus, a basketball player might indeed have more money than many of her fellows, but so long as that did not give him greater prestige or political power, and did not enable her to ensure a better education for her children simply because of her basketball skills, the extra money accruing to the player would be compatible with social equality.

Several points are immediately worthy of note. First, what motivates Walzer’s egalitarianism is not “a hope for the elimination of differences” but “a society free from domination...no more bowing and scraping...no more masters, no more slaves.”⁶⁵⁹ Equality and difference are, for Walzer, appropriate bedfellows. This is one reason why the book is subtitled “a defense of pluralism and equality.” This meant that many readers questioned whether Walzer’s argument was really an egalitarian one. Indeed, it is noteworthy that references to “socialism” are remarkably thin on the ground in *Spheres* compared to earlier works such as *Radical Principles*. However, in the 25 years since the publication of *Spheres*, the idea that egalitarians should valorize difference has gained wide currency in the work of, inter alia, Iris Marion Young, and the question of whether complex equality is real equality may interest readers less than it once would have done. Nonetheless, this points us towards a second feature of *Spheres*: namely, that it re-conceptualizes the subject of distributive justice. The two major theories of distributive justice to appear in the 1970s – those of Rawls and of Nozick - may have disagreed on how goods should be distributed, but they were essentially answering the same question. For Walzer, theories of distributive justice should not approach distribution as if it had the form, “*People distribute goods to (other) people,*” but, “*People conceive and create goods, which they then distribute among themselves.*”⁶⁶⁰ The emphasis on the social production of the goods that are then distributed is a development of the argument of “Philosophy and Democracy,” except that it applies the point to the whole of social life and not just to the political process.

As in “Philosophy and Democracy”, then, the focus on the development of the forms of social life leads to an enhanced recognition of the importance of the diversity of different types of social life, or in Walzer’s terms of pluralism. Walzer rejects the idea that there can be principles of distributive justice that apply without regard to the meaning of the goods in question, arguing instead in favor of distributing “different goods to different companies of men and women for different reasons and in accordance with different procedures.”⁶⁶¹ He claims that “every criterion that has any force at all [such as desert, need, and free exchange, the merits of each of which he has just considered meets the general rule within its sphere, and not elsewhere.”⁶⁶² This is the first meaning of pluralism that Walzer operates with: social life in modern western societies is complex and made up of different spheres – in other words, pluralistic – hence the theory of justice must be complex and pluralist. The second meaning of pluralism is external. Walzer’s theory of justice is pluralist in that it insists that principles of justice depend on the meaning that social goods have in each particular society. The principles must be plural both *within* and *between* societies. This is why Walzer concludes his book by

arguing that justice is both relative and non-relative. It is relative because it “is relative to social meanings”⁶⁶³ and “is rooted in the distinct understandings of places, honors, jobs, things of all sorts, that constitute a shared way of life.” It is non-relative because to “override those understandings is **(always)** to act unjustly.”⁶⁶⁴ Although, given his distaste for distinctions between procedure and substance,⁶⁶⁵ Walzer would likely dislike this point; it might be said for ease of understanding that, for Walzer, justice is substantively relative and procedurally non-relative. In every society, justice requires attending to the shared understandings of that society, hence justice is procedurally similar. In each society, those understandings will be different, and hence the substance of justice will be different.

I want to make three more points about *Spheres* at this point before returning to it later in the chapter. First, Walzer draws heavily on the claim that there is a set of shared understandings in any society. This is one of the reasons why his argument in *Spheres* has been considered “communitarian,” as I shall discuss below. In fact, it is closely related to his depiction of democracy in “Philosophy and Democracy.” The existence of disagreement does not, on Walzer’s account, mean that there are no shared understandings. Rather, disagreement requires “that the society be faithful to the disagreements, providing institutional channels for their expression, adjudicative mechanisms, and alternative distributions.”⁶⁶⁶ This is a point that is not given a great deal of attention in *Spheres*, although the argument is reiterated at several points,⁶⁶⁷ and for this reason, Walzer was to dedicate the second of his Tanner lectures that provided the early draft of *Interpretation and Social Criticism* to the questions of whether there are social understandings and whether a political theory that seeks to draw out a set of shared understandings can possibly be critical. This is also the theme of *The Company of Critics*.

Secondly, it is not accurate to say that there are no general principles of justice in Walzer’s theory. The “Theory of Goods” that I already referred to twice is a set of six propositions intended “to explain and limit the pluralism of distributive possibilities.”⁶⁶⁸ The limits on pluralism explain the possibility of some loose set of principles. In this case, the propositions are:

1. All the goods with which distributive justice is concerned are social goods...2. Men and women take on concrete identities because of the way they conceive and create, and then possess and employ social goods...3. There is no single set of primary or basic goods conceivable across all moral or material worlds...4. [It] is the meaning of goods that determines their movement. Distributive criteria and arrangements are intrinsic not to the good-in-itself but to the social good...5. Social meanings are historical in character; and so distributions, and just and unjust distributions, change over time...6. When meanings are distinct, distributions must be autonomous. Every social good or set of goods constitutes...a distributive sphere within which only certain criteria and arrangements are appropriate.⁶⁶⁹

Much of the argument of *Spheres* is an explanation of what the six propositions entail. Furthermore, there is another general argument made by Walzer that echoes throughout the book and to which I have already referred, albeit not in his terminology. It is that rather than being concerned about “monopoly” of certain people over a particular good, theorists of justice should seek to tackle the “dominance” of a particular good over other goods.⁶⁷⁰ In other words, rather than seeking to equalize distribution in each separate sphere, justice requires that inequalities be

accepted within spheres so long as the inequalities are the result of reasons “internal” to the good itself as it is understood in that society. On Walzer’s account, opposing dominance seems “to capture best the plurality of social meanings and the real complexity of distributive systems.”⁶⁷¹ So, there are loose general principles that Walzer seeks to apply to each different sphere but there is no set of principles that applies across the sphere. In a sense, this point is parallel to that about the relativity or otherwise of justice. For Walzer, the general principles that no good should be dominant and that each should be distributed on the basis of a shared understanding of the meaning of that good are universal. That means that distributions will be pluralist.⁶⁷²

Finally, the existence of the loose general principles is demonstrated in the similarity in structure of many of the chapters in the book. Apart from the first two chapters and the last one, the chapters in *Spheres* consider a particular sphere of social life – security and welfare, money and commodities, office, hard work, free time, education, kinship and love, divine grace, recognition, and political power.⁶⁷³ In most of the cases, Walzer considers what “simple equality” in that sphere might mean, before rejecting it on the grounds of either impracticability or injustice and advocating a form of complex equality instead. For example, in the sphere of office, there are two forms of simple equality – meritocracy and rotation. Walzer rejects each of these on the grounds that the former “would merely replace the dominance of private power with the dominance of state power” and the latter would become “a mask for new sorts of domination” if it were extended universally.⁶⁷⁴ Rather, says Walzer, the most qualified candidates should have a monopoly on the sphere of office, but we must “set limits to their prerogatives...we must insist that these do not become the basis of tyrannical claims to power and privilege.”⁶⁷⁵ He insists on office holders being “contained” and exercising “humility” and claims that, were those to things to be implemented, “the distribution of office might loom less large in egalitarian thought than it currently does.”⁶⁷⁶ The structural similarity between the various chapters of the book reflects the procedural unity of Walzer’s theory of justice. In each sphere, principles internal to that sphere are teased out and the claim is made that those principles should be applied to the sphere. Additionally, in each sphere Walzer argues that the most important thing from the point of view of justice is to set bounds to the sphere and not to be overly concerned with the distribution within the sphere.⁶⁷⁷

4. “Liberalism and the Art of Separation”

Like “Philosophy and Democracy,” this article appeared in the journal *Political Theory*. Also like the earlier article, “Liberalism and the Art of Separation” rehearses and develops the argument of *Spheres of Justice*. On this occasion, as can be seen in the second half of the title, the theme is the boundaries between different spheres of social life. Finally, this article, like “Philosophy and Democracy,” has an interesting relationship to the mainstream of Anglo-American political theory that constitutes the bulk of the readership of *Political Theory*.⁶⁷⁸ Dealing with liberal political theory and with the relationship between church and state, among other things, it is of a congenial topic. On the other hand, like most of Walzer’s writing, the article is critical of liberalism in important ways. In this article, unlike in *Spheres*, Walzer once more talks of himself as a socialist, concluding by arguing that the socialist method of separation is “more realistic” than the liberal one because it is less lonely.⁶⁷⁹

Walzer’s basic argument is that liberalism is one, but only one, way of “drawing the map of the social and political world.”⁶⁸⁰ To its credit, it is pluralist because, unlike the preliberal map, it separates the spheres of social life such as church and state, public and private, and civil

society and polity. Separating these spheres is one of liberalism's most famous achievements. By starting the article in this way, Walzer shows the increasing debt to liberal political theory that was evident in *Spheres* even as he continues to reject it. For Walzer, "Liberalism is a world of walls." As one of the central arguments of *Spheres* was that maintaining the walls – in the book he usually talks about "fences" – it is by now clear that Walzer the socialist and radical democrat is not unremittingly hostile to liberalism.

Yet Walzer does not, or at least did not in 1984, see himself as a liberal. Although he credits liberalism's emphasis on the art of separation, he will ultimately criticize how it has drawn the walls in the social world. Even so, it should be noted, as Walzer does, that the "art of separation has never been highly regarded on the left... Leftists have generally stressed both the radical interdependence of the different social spheres and the direct and causal links that radiate outwards from the economy."⁶⁸¹ By taking strands of his thought from different parts of the political spectrum,⁶⁸² Walzer shows the sort of anti-factionalism that is evident as early as *Political Action* and that becomes so prominent in *Politics and Passion*.

In order to understand why Walzer ultimately rejects the liberal art of separation, we must first understand how it operates. In each case, a wall is drawn between different spheres of social life, and, in the process, a new liberty is created. By separating civil society from political community, liberals created "the sphere of economic competition and free enterprise"; by separating public and private life, they created "the sphere of individual and familial freedom, privacy, and domesticity."⁶⁸³ As readers of *Spheres* know, Walzer advocates pluralism in part because it reflects what he takes to be the increasing complexity of social life and the fact of the existence of myriad different spheres with different logics all of their own. So, the "art of separation is not [contra Marxists] an illusory or fantastic enterprise; it is a morally and politically necessary adaptation to the complexities of modern life. Liberal theory reflects and reinforces a long-term process of social differentiation."⁶⁸⁴

By separating out the spheres of social life, liberals encouraged both freedom and equality, which go hand-in-hand when the art of separation operates.⁶⁸⁵ As he noted in *Spheres*, the different spheres are important respects egalitarian: the market is open to all comers, meritocracy provides equal opportunities; privacy "presupposes the equal value...of all private lives," and so on.⁶⁸⁶ This is a formal type of equality, but it is enough to enable Walzer to conclude, in terms that could have been drawn straight from *Spheres*, that a modern "society enjoys both freedom and equality when success in one institutional setting isn't convertible into success in another... There are, of course, constraints and inequalities within each institutional setting, but we will have little reason to worry about these if they reflect the internal logic of institutions and practices."⁶⁸⁷ Thus far it might seem that "Liberalism" is a sequel to *Spheres* that draws the surprising conclusion that liberalism is after all a form of complex equality.

It is not, however, because liberalism is far too concerned with enforcing certain separations and not sufficiently concerned with others.⁶⁸⁸ Liberalism focuses on protecting against political power and in limiting government. Walzer credits it with this but adds that,

these are not the only cases...in which liberty and equality are threatened. We need to look closely at the ways in which wealth, once political tyranny is abolished, itself takes on tyrannical forms. Limited government is the great success of the art of separation, but that very success opens the way for...*private* government...it is with the critique of private government that the leftist complaint against liberalism properly begins.⁶⁸⁹

Walzer argues that the purpose of the separation of civil society from politics was to avoid free exchange being contaminated by coercion. However, coercion is a problem in the market too and it is “a false view of civil society, a bad sociology” to claim otherwise.⁶⁹⁰ For the art of separation to ensure free exchange in any meaningful sense, it must be “accompanied by disestablishment and divestment – and [by] appropriate cultural forms... within the economic sphere.”⁶⁹¹ In other words, the art of separation requires co-operative ownership, just as complex equality was seen to in *Spheres*. According to Walzer, a liberalism that preached co-operative ownership would be a “consistent liberalism – that is, one that passes over into democratic socialism... of a liberal sort.”⁶⁹² This is the first formal recognition in Walzer’s work that his brand of democratic socialism is inseparable from what he sees to be an attractive liberalism. In each case, what is required is the confinement of the market so as to ensure that it does not dominate other spheres. The market need not – indeed, should not – be abolished.

Co-operative ownership is required on liberal principles, Walzer argues, because “a realistic understanding of social cohesion” would require rejecting the traditional liberal sociology of the free individual who is “author of self and social roles.”⁶⁹³ In its place would come the recognition that “Churches, schools, markets, and families are social institutions with particular histories. They take different forms in different societies... In no case are they shaped wholly by individual agreements, for these agreements always take place within... particular patterns.”⁶⁹⁴ This is the pluralism of *Spheres* combined with the social ontology of Charles Taylor and it will help to understand why Walzer’s communitarianism arises when he seeks to reconcile his socialism with his liberalism. In this particular article, it enables him to conclude, that “the art of separation is not rooted in or warranted by individual separateness... [but] by social complexity. We do not separate individuals; we separate institutions, practices, relationships of different sorts... We aim... not at the freedom of the solitary individual but at... institutional integrity.”⁶⁹⁵ It is important to note that Walzer does not intend to advocate restrictions on freedom; rather, his point is that freedom does not arise from atomization. This is why I talked about the combination of pluralism and Taylor-esque social ontology.

“Liberalism and the Art of Separation” is in many ways a sequel to *Spheres*. Much of its argument simply reiterates what Walzer had already said – drawing out different passages and making his point clearer by juxtaposing arguments that were separated by many pages in *Spheres*. But it is also a development of *Spheres* in that it is much more directly political than is the book. In “Liberalism,” Walzer explicitly takes his task to be taking a liberal insight about the importance of social diversity and complexity and improving it by mixing it with the socialist insight about the fact that institutional settings have integrity only when they are socialized. Only the socialization of the settings/spheres can enable “their participants [to] enjoy a rough equality.”⁶⁹⁶ It is also necessary to reduce the likelihood of boundary crossings, because people who take pride in their social roles are “more likely to respect the settings within which the roles are played.”⁶⁹⁷ For Walzer, then, socialism and liberalism must be combined.

The attentive reader may well have noticed that one thing is curiously missing from this drawing of insights: namely, democracy. We could say, to use the language of “Philosophy and Democracy,” that here Walzer discusses what is right without emphasizing what we have a right to do. It expresses what he hopes people will decide to do and not what he wishes to impose on them. Yet democracy is not totally absent from the picture in “Liberalism” and when it does appear – in the quote I used when discussing “Philosophy and Democracy” – we see that while liberalism and socialism may have to bend to each other’s insights on occasion, neither can

challenge democratic prerogative. At the end of “Liberalism,” Walzer asks what should happen if a “political majority misunderstands or overrides the autonomy of this or that institutional setting” and insists that the “truth” that liberalism and socialism have to offer must give way before that majority. That is why a majoritarian misunderstanding is “the unavoidable risk of democracy.”⁶⁹⁸ The people have a right to adopt a mistaken sociology such as the atomism of liberalism or the failure to recognize social pluralism of much Marxist thought, and the ideology or philosophy in question will have to cede to the people. So, even when Walzer barely mentions democracy, he remains what he called himself in the sub-title to *Radical Principles*: an unreconstructed democrat.

5. Exodus and Revolution

The previous three pieces of writing, and to a lesser extent the one before that, were on topics similar to what the other members of the School for Ethical and Legal Philosophy were writing on in the early 1980s. The acknowledgements page for *Spheres* makes it clear that Walzer’s primary interlocutors by this stage in his career were from that School or the tradition of thought from which it drew. Yet he remained interested in his other concerns from the 1960s and 1970s that were the result of the influence of the other traditions of thought to which he was subject, namely, Irving Howe’s radical democracy, Samuel Beer’s historicized idealism, and Judaism. *Exodus and Revolution* - the writing of which delayed Walzer’s work on *Interpretation and Social Criticism* and *The Company of Critics*, which continue the research project of *Spheres* and the related articles - is evidence that those traditions continued to give him material for academic research. Walzer retained an interest in the themes in his earlier thought that did not play much part in his writing on distributive justice. The different tradition of thought from which the book emerged is shown by the omission from the acknowledgements of any members of the School. Even Judith Jarvis Thomson and Robert Nozick, two of Walzer’s biggest influences are not mentioned. On the other hand, Irving Howe is mentioned, along with various colleagues at institutions that have Judaism as a primary research interest: namely, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, CUNY’s Center for Jewish Studies, and Harvard’s Hillel House.⁶⁹⁹

Exodus and Revolution recalls Walzer’s earlier writings in many ways. Like *The Revolution of the Saints* it draws on Puritanism at various points. Like *Regicide and Revolution*, it shows a Walzer more accepting of the possibility of radical change than those who see his citation of “shared understandings” as being innately conservative would like to admit. Like *Political Action*, it is a work in which some of Walzer’s skills are non-professional.⁷⁰⁰ And like much of Walzer’s work – including the notable examples of *Just and Unjust Wars* and *Spheres of Justice* – it seeks to use history to make a moral argument. In *Exodus and Revolution*, that argument concerns the meaning of the exodus and what it would mean to be delivered from “suffering and oppression...[to] escape from bondage.”⁷⁰¹ He argues that the story is so popular in western history⁷⁰² because it offers a “this-worldly and historical” account of liberation.⁷⁰³ Having originally intended to write a political history of the Exodus, Walzer found it of such importance that he turned his book into an account of liberation and revolution. Indeed, he came to see it as “a paradigm of revolutionary politics.”⁷⁰⁴ The book is not about the Exodus as history but about the Exodus as inspiration or “radical hope.”⁷⁰⁵

However, that hope is not unrealistic optimism, for the Exodus as told by Walzer is one with many problems. On frequent occasions, the Jewish people in the wilderness wished to return to slavery in Egypt, teaching the lesson that casting off one’s bonds is more difficult than

even the physical task would suggest.⁷⁰⁶ Walzer's story follows a structure similar in some ways to Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Starting with the hell that is Egypt, it moves to the purgatory of the wilderness, and only finally to the paradise that is the Promised Land.⁷⁰⁷ Even once the Promised Land is reached, that is a better place but not a perfect one. That is one reason why the Exodus, despite the presence of miracles in the telling, becomes in Walzer's account a this-worldly tale. It is unlike other-worldly tales of heroism but it is also unlike ancient tales such as the *Odyssey* in which the hero eventually returns home. The "Exodus is a journey forward – not only in time and space. It is a march toward a goal, a moral progress, a transformation."⁷⁰⁸ It appeals to political radicals for precisely that reason: because the result of the moral transformation is a political change.⁷⁰⁹ Not a Messianic one⁷¹⁰, admittedly, but still a change for the better that builds "a world more attractive."⁷¹¹

Walzer had long been interested in movements for political change. It was that which first sparked his interest in Puritanism, which he otherwise found so unattractive. For the Puritans were the this-worldly, organized movement for political change par excellence and, whatever else he felt of Puritanism, the young Walzer could not help but admire its organization. *Political Action* centers on achieving change and, moreover, concludes its argument with the claim that such a claim would not be revolutionary in the Marxist sense, but would still be for the better. A similar argument is made in "A Theory of Revolution," which we discussed because of its appearance in *Radical Principles*. In each case, Walzer the form of revolution that Walzer is opposing is somewhat akin to the Messianism that stands in contrast to his telling of the Exodus story, while his preferred option is a this-worldly one that succeeds in bringing about real change. This is also his reasoning for accepting the executions of Charles and Louis in *Regicide and Revolution*. Walzer is not opposed to drastic action when it really is called for but it must have a clear purpose in mind and one that is genuinely achievable. In a sense, then, *Exodus and Revolution* is a work that was a long time in germination. Only in the year that he turned 50 did Walzer finally get to publish a fully developed account of how social change can occur without completely abandoning the social world that we all share.

What model does the Exodus bequeath to movements for social change? As I said above, it is a model that has a beginning, middle, and end. In Walzer's telling of the story, the Hebrew people move from being slaves in Egypt,⁷¹² through the first period in the Sinai desert in which they were "slaves in the wilderness", as yet unready to become a free community,⁷¹³ through the covenant at Mount Sinai that made them a "free people,"⁷¹⁴ and on, finally, to the land of Israel.⁷¹⁵ The road is hard, because first the physical and then the mental shackles that made the people slaves had to be cast off. Indeed, the actual people who arrived in Canaan were not the same people as those who left Egypt.⁷¹⁶ According to tradition, the Jews spent 40 years in the wilderness because only a generation born in freedom would be ready for the Promised Land. Even Moses was not able to reach Canaan but died just before Joshua led the people into it.⁷¹⁷ The Exodus is not a story that could appeal to liberal individualists, but it is a good one for communitarians of any type.

Walzer ultimately draws three lessons from the Exodus for revolutionary politics.⁷¹⁸ The first is that "wherever you live, it is probably Egypt."⁷¹⁹ The crucial features of Egypt were that it was oppressive and corrupt.⁷²⁰ Walzer argued in *Spheres of Justice* that the appeal of egalitarianism is that it invokes a world beyond oppression. The Exodus story invokes a world of oppression so as to hold against it the possibility of a world that is not oppressive. The appeal of this-worldly accounts is that they make the escape from oppression seem possible to we who live in a world without miracles; without the possibility of an Exodus, "oppression would be

experienced as an inescapable condition.”⁷²¹ If oppression were inescapable then, Walzer argues, moral criticism of it would be meaningless. Presumably accepting the maxim “ought implies can”, he claims that something cannot be unjust unless it is potentially avoidable.⁷²² In the loosest of senses, then, *Exodus and Revolution* does relate to the research project of complex equality: both invoke the problems of a particular society so as to suggest the possibility of that particular society being more equal, more plural, more just.

For that story to have any impact, it is not enough that the liberation be possible and that the “better world” be realistic and not messianic. The original world must be realistic too. For this reason, Walzer emphasizes that the oppression in Egypt was more complicated than simple slavery and the “attempted genocide” that was the killing of the first-born.⁷²³ Hebrew oppression in Egypt was primarily social and economic: the Israelites were recruited as slave labor in the building of Egyptian pyramids and store cities even though they were not legitimate slaves because they had not been captured in war.⁷²⁴ The illegitimacy of the slave labor is a key part of the particular oppression that was Egyptian bondage, because what defined that bondage was the lack of limits to it. Walzer argues that, “Egyptian bondage was the bondage of a people to the arbitrary power of the state.”⁷²⁵ This is why the Bible was later to insist on all sorts of limits to slavery, such as the laws requiring that slaves be allowed to rest on the Sabbath and that they be freed after seven years of slavery.⁷²⁶ This is one of two reasons why Walzer makes a point of emphasizing that Israelite’s bondage was socio-economic and not merely violent: because it brings out so neatly the distinction with the realistic just regime. The second reason is that he wishes to emphasize that Egyptian society held many attractions for the Hebrew slaves.⁷²⁷ It was this that was to make the escape so difficult. In particular, it explains why the people were so quick to start worshipping the Golden Calf while Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the Commandments.⁷²⁸

The attraction of the corrupt society also explains one of the greatest dangers in the process of liberation; namely, the possibility of “backsliding”,⁷²⁹ or building a new society that is as corrupt as the one that was left.⁷³⁰ The new world requires a huge commitment. Moreover, the leaders of the exodus or of the revolution often have goals that may be different to those of the people.⁷³¹ As Walzer puts it, “The people, dreaming of milk and honey, are materialists; Moses and the Levites, dreaming of holiness, are idealists.”⁷³² Walzer calls this the “standard interpretation” of the Golden Calf incident and other murmurings in the wilderness and claims that it has a political purpose: namely, to uphold the position of Moses and the Levites, who operate as something akin to a Leninist vanguard.

As I explained in the discussion of “A Theory of Revolution,” Walzer rejects vanguard politics. For this reason, he is at pains to emphasize that there is “an idealism, a spirituality, a high theory of milk and honey; and...that the Levites have a material interest in holiness.”⁷³³ Walzer’s preferred interpretation of the Exodus story is that the covenant made the Israelites into “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation”.⁷³⁴ The possibility of backsliding is ever-present, but not because of a particular corruption that the people, but not the priestly elite, are prone to.⁷³⁵ Hence the second and third lessons of *Exodus and Revolution* are ones that essentially go together. The second is that, “there is a better place, a world more attractive, a promised land.”⁷³⁶ Reaching that land involves the risk of backsliding, however, and so the third lesson is that “the way to the land is through the wilderness.” The only way to build a better world is by “joining together and marching.”⁷³⁷ In a redemption story without miracles or a messiah, community is the only way in which the goal can be achieved and, even so, the road to redemption is difficult and never fully secured.⁷³⁸

I have provided that sketch of the argument of *Exodus and Revolution* because it is an important feature of Walzer's thought because of the way in which it reflects a different research agenda to that of complex equality and yet one that is not incompatible with it. Indeed, as noted above, the two overlap in significant ways. Yet they may also appear to be in tension. After all, in the complex equality research program, Walzer leaned heavily upon the argument that particular societies value particular social goods in different ways. In *Exodus and Revolution*, he seeks to draw sweeping lessons from a legendary story that is more than 3,000 years old for much of western (and even Latin American) politics. How can the two be reconciled? It seems that for Walzer to attempt to reconcile the two, he would have to focus on the fact that the Exodus story does not talk about detailed institutional arrangements. Hence its use is as a tale of heroism that can be understood by people in different societies because of traditions in their society that have a family resemblance to it. He might also add that the Exodus story has been influential in so many different societies that it transcends the plurality of social meanings. That may have been why he starts the book by detailing so many instances in which revolutionary groups used the story.

That argument may be correct, but even if the arguments of the two types of work are not incompatible with each other, they bear a striking dissimilarity. I suspect that that is because complex equality emerged as Walzer's research program when he attempted to work through dilemmas that arose because of the interaction of the tradition of radical democracy exemplified by Irving Howe and that of analytic philosophy he encountered in the School for Ethical and Legal Philosophy. I have made that point already and will return to it below. On the other hand, the influence of the School is almost entirely absent in *Exodus and Revolution*. That work displays the ongoing influence of radical democracy on Walzer and his sustained commitment to political activism. Unlike *Spheres of Justice* and its ilk, *Exodus* is not a purely academic work. The style in which Walzer researched and argued *Exodus* also suggests that the influence of Walzer's graduate education at Harvard under the supervision of Beer et al. was by no means dissipated by the 1980s. Using historical research to make moral and political arguments was a feature of the work of Walzer's graduate advisers, as well as of much of his work, in particular of *Just and Unjust Wars*. In so far as complex equality and *Exodus and Revolution* display differences in research emphasis, I suspect that the reason for those differences is the different traditions of thought that influenced Walzer in choosing them as research projects and in writing them.

III

In this section, we discuss some of the themes of Walzer's thought as they ran throughout his work in the early 1980s. The order in which the themes are considered is supposed to illuminate the argument with which I conclude the section, and which dominates the remainder of the chapter, about the development of Walzer's thought. We start with the central substantive political positions that Walzer advocated; namely, his pluralism, his democratic vision, and his account of membership. From there, we are able to consider what he means by complex equality and the ways in which it is a form of equality. I move from there to a discussion of Walzer's account of the role of a political theorist and the authority of democratic decision-making over philosophical argument. Finally, we turn to the ideological labels with which Walzer was grappling in the early 1980s and which have been applied to him. As stated above, I argue that

much of Walzer's communitarianism emerges as he attempts to grapple with the socialist democracy of Irving Howe and *Dissent* as it comes into contact with the liberal egalitarianism of much of the School for Ethical and Legal Philosophy.

1. Pluralism.

As I said earlier, there are two senses in which Walzer is a pluralist. First, in each of "Philosophy and Democracy," "Liberalism and the Art of Separation,"⁷³⁹ and *Spheres of Justice*,⁷⁴⁰ Walzer argues that respect for the historical traditions of different societies, as well as for what he had referred to frequently in *Just and Unjust Wars* and in "The Morality of States" as "the right of collective self-determination", mandates that we accept a variety of different political and social forms in different societies. Rather than seeking to force every polity down a similar road of development, we must accept each community's right to organize itself as it wishes, provided that it allows its members the right to exit from the community if they wish to do so.⁷⁴¹

Pluralism in this sense does indeed make Walzer seem "communitarian," for it is linked in with his argument that the "political community is the appropriate setting for this enterprise [the study of distributive justice as a spherical endeavor]."⁷⁴² Although scholars do not always agree on what it means to be a communitarian, it is easy to understand why an argument that different political communities should have different standards of justice depending on the values of the community would be deemed communitarian. This type of pluralism, which I will call external pluralism, is linked to Walzer's arguments about membership, which we will discuss below, and to his musings about the relativity of justice. It is because of his external pluralism that he takes so seriously the claim that radically hierarchical societies such as that part of India that operated on a caste system might be just so long as they operate in accord with a set of shared understandings.⁷⁴³ External pluralism is the successor of the argument about "communities of character" with which Walzer defended *Just and Unjust Wars* against its liberal or cosmopolitan critics in "The Moral Standing of States". Yet although external pluralism is based in part on recognition of the importance of community in fostering self-identity, it is equally capable of being seen as part of Walzer's defense of democracy. That is why I emphasized that it is of a piece with his argument about collective self-determination. External pluralism is important, as Walzer points out in "Philosophy and Democracy," because we value our right to partake in political decision-making and insist on our right to make the wrong decision even when a "philosophically correct" answer to a particular political question is available.⁷⁴⁴ External pluralism, then, could be defended as the necessary form of respect to be paid to the rights of the community or as a form of respect for democracy, itself mandated on the basis of the importance that individual human beings attach to partaking in politics. Walzer himself, I believe, would want to defend external pluralism on these grounds. This partially explains his discomfort with the label of communitarian.⁷⁴⁵

In any case, in much of Walzer's writing, external pluralism operates alongside what I shall call internal pluralism. This is what he claims the caste society of India lacks: namely, social differentiation. The account of internal pluralism occupies the bulk of the argument of "Liberalism and the Art of Separation" and much of *Spheres of Justice*, but is also present in the account in *Exodus and Revolution* of the relationship between Moses and the prophets, on the one hand, and the people, on the other.⁷⁴⁶ The clearest definition of a pluralist society shows why internal and external pluralism are, in important way, analogues. Walzer says that his working

assumption is of a pluralist society, which means that, “so long as adults associate freely, they will shape diverse communities and cultures within the larger political community.”⁷⁴⁷ In one society, the parts will operate in different ways, just as different societies do from each other. It is for this reason that each sphere has rationales different from each other sphere.

Internal pluralism as it should operate today is most fully summed up in the account of complex equality in the contemporary USA with which Walzer concludes *Spheres of Justice* (and which sums up the structure of that work as a whole). According to Walzer, given the internal pluralism of “our own society,” the “appropriate arrangements” for it are:

A decentralized democratic socialism; a strong welfare state run, in part at least, by local and amateur officials; a constrained market; an open and demystified civil service; independent public schools; the sharing of hard work and free time; the protection of religious and familial life; a system of public honoring and dishonoring free from all considerations of rank and class; workers’ control of companies and factories; a politics of parties, movements, meetings, and public debate.⁷⁴⁸

This is a form of internal pluralism and it is for that form that Walzer argues in the book.

Internal pluralism is in effect when the different spheres of social life operate in accordance with principles internal to that particular sphere and when no sphere is able to dominate the others. This is the crucial feature of a just and complexly equal society. It is, on Walzer’s view, not unjust that a person is able to afford a superior hi-fi set or rug or even a yacht than other people are, so long as those things “have only use value and individualized symbolic value.”⁷⁴⁹ Each of those goods is part of the sphere of money and commodities and hence they are all things that “money can buy”. What is unjust when people’s superior position in the sphere of money and commodities gives them advantages in other spheres, enabling them to impose risks on other people and making certain exchanges free only in the most formal of senses.⁷⁵⁰ For this reason, Walzer develops a list of what he calls “blocked exchanges”.⁷⁵¹ These are things that money cannot buy, because what it would buy are things that are not commodities and are, hence, outside the appropriate sphere. Examples are criminal justice, political power, political office and welfare services.⁷⁵² The purpose of the list of blocked exchanges is to demarcate the sphere of money and commodities. The list is, therefore, part of the description of what internal pluralism means in the contemporary USA. In fact, it is the most important part, because as Walzer repeatedly insists the sphere of money and commodities is, in the USA, the one most likely to dominate the others.⁷⁵³

Where Walzer’s external pluralism is part of his argument about democracy and relates to his theory of membership, his internal pluralism is a part – probably the key part – of his theory of complex equality. Pluralism in this sense is not obviously communitarian; rather, it is an aspect of Walzer’s socialism, albeit one of a very particular kind. Not many socialists would feel comfortable saying that the unequal distribution of material goods is unimportant even if the caveat were added, “So long as [those things] have only use value and individualized symbolic value.” As we saw when discussing “Liberalism and the Art of Separation,” by the early 1980s, Walzer’s socialism sat alongside an appreciation of certain aspects of liberalism, both of which were superseded by his democratic commitments. Internal pluralism is a form of socialism that owes much to Walzer’s history of political activism and his work on *Dissent* and the *New*

Republic, but it is also one that demonstrates the influence of many of his colleagues in the School for Ethical and Legal Philosophy.

2. Democracy and political participation

Walzer is committed to a form of socialism, to a notion of equality, and to certain liberal values. He has a stance on the way in which membership should be distributed, a theory of how education should operate,⁷⁵⁴ and a theory of justice in war. All of these are important parts of his political theory. Democracy, on the other hand, is in many ways **the** cornerstone of Walzer's worldview. All the other values either emanate from it or must bow down before it. This was the case in Walzer's writings in the 1970s and can be seen to vitalize, for example, the argument that the just war is a defensive war fought to maintain the inhabitant's right to collective self-determination. Most importantly, it runs as a theme throughout *Radical Principles*, in which Walzer refers to himself as an "unreconstructed democrat." It is equally important a theme in the early 1980s. In considering how Walzer developed his arguments in favor of democracy in "Philosophy and Democracy," in *Spheres of Justice*, in "Liberalism and the Art of Separation," in "Political Decision-Making and Political Education" and in "The Distribution of Membership," we can gain a clearer view of what exactly it is that Walzer means by democracy.

The most important point about Walzer's democracy is that it is not liberal democracy. His political theory does not imagine a society of rights-holding individuals one of whose rights happens to be the right to vote in elections and even run for office if we see fit. We get closer to Walzer's view if we think of him as a "socialized democrat". I added the prefix to the word social so as to emphasize the fact that democracy is a social product first and foremost and avoid the connotation of socialist democracy. Democracy, for Walzer, is socialist, but it is also and above all social. This is the argument at the end of "Liberalism and the Art of Separation," in which Walzer advocates the socialization of institutional settings to ensure a "rough equality" between participants.⁷⁵⁵ In other words, a socialized democracy is a socialist democracy because institutions in which the participants actively take part and view each other as part of a society are ones in which the participants are, in important senses, "roughly" equal.

A socialized democracy is not, however, a liberal democracy, and that for several reasons. The first is, most obviously, that democracy is not just a system of voting. Rather, democracy "is a way of allocating power and legitimating its use – or better, it is *the political way* of allocating power. Every extrinsic reason is ruled out. What counts is argument among the citizens."⁷⁵⁶ The essence of democracy, then, is debate. We live in a democracy when we debate the crucial political issues of the day and make our decisions in accord with "the rule of reasons".⁷⁵⁷ In a democracy, the most eloquent speaker, armed with the most persuasive set of reasons, carries the day. In a sense, then, the vision of democracy in which the right to vote more or less subsumes every other facet of democracy is not just an impoverished democracy. It is, for Walzer at least, anti-democratic, in that the voters do not participate in any meaningful way and money and organizational skill have too great a role to play in determining the outcome. This is why Walzer twice argued in the 1980s that the party convention was a preferable form of democracy to the primary.⁷⁵⁸ In a primary, grass-roots organization is unimportant or "superfluous" and the state residents are "mere spectators and then, miraculously, citizen-sovereigns."⁷⁵⁹ In a party convention, although the party machine is more influential, the individual citizen is as well. As conventions are "more intense forms of participation," the "distance between leaders and followers" is reduced and, more importantly, the "centrality of argument" is maintained. Without

that, Walzer argues, “political equality quickly becomes a meaningless distribution.”⁷⁶⁰ Democracy is the meaningful form of political equality because all citizens are admitted to the decision-making forum and invited to participate in the debate. Walzer’s vision of democracy bears more than a passing resemblance to Talmudic interpretation of the Bible, especially in the claim that political rights “underpin a process that has no endpoint, an argument that has no definitive conclusion.”⁷⁶¹

It is because democracy means participating⁷⁶² in a debate the outcome of which is ideally determined – but, always, provisionally determined - by argument that education is so important for the political process. As Walzer said in “Political Decision-Making,” one of the most key duties of a citizen is to think through vicariously the decisions made by political leaders. If democracy were conceived as a method of leadership selection, that might seem a peripheral feature of what citizens do, but when democracy is conceived as a social argument, it is clear why thinking about the decisions taken, even if we do not take them ourselves, is so important. The account of democracy as social argument also casts a different shade on Walzer’s insistence in “Philosophy and Democracy” that the truth of the philosopher is just one more opinion in the world of opinion. This does not just mean that philosopher’s have one vote and just one vote in an election. It does, of course, mean that, but it does not just mean that. It also means that the philosopher must think about the method of presentation of her argument when she presents it to the community. She must, like all other would be opinion-formers, seek to make her argument as persuasive as she can. This is why Walzer emphasizes that the philosopher “loses none of the rights he has as an ordinary citizen” when he withdraws from the community of ideas.⁷⁶³ Philosophers are entitled to fight for recognition of their truth as the best policy but to do so they must adopt an approach different to that of the bearer of truth: they must become sophists or critics and seek to persuade.⁷⁶⁴ Recognizing that his knowledge “can only be found outside this particular place” and that it therefore “yields no rights inside,” the philosopher must use the communally accepted standards of argumentation.⁷⁶⁵

Democracy, then, is political argument resulting in ever-provisional decision-making on the basis of persuasive reasoning. It is because democracy ought to adhere to the “rule of reasons” that Walzer develops a list of “blocked uses of political power”⁷⁶⁶ somewhat akin to his list of blocked exchanges. After all, although Walzer wants to remind Americans that the sphere of money and commodities is the biggest threat to complex equality in the USA today and the most likely source of domination, he is also worried about politics becoming dominant. This is because, “Throughout most of human history, the sphere of politics has been constructed on the absolutist model, where power is monopolized by a single person, all of whose energies are devoted to making it dominant not merely at the boundaries but across them, within every distributive sphere.”⁷⁶⁷ The blocked uses of power are intended both to foster democracy and to keep politics in its sphere. They include such things as forbidding enslavement, protecting private property from “arbitrary” taxation, outlawing the sale of political power, separating religious life from politics, and refusing to allow state officials to “regulate or censor the arguments that go on, not only in the political sphere but in all the spheres, about the meaning of social goods and the appropriate distributive boundaries.”⁷⁶⁸ This is why I have entitled the subsection “Democracy and political participation”. There is a sense, in Walzer’s work, in which the two are inseparable. So long as people participate, we have a democracy, and people must participate because “politics is unavoidable.”⁷⁶⁹ The unavoidability of politics is reflected in the essentiality of democracy as the political medium. We cannot see each other as free and equal if

we do not have the same right to participate in political life, so democracy is the necessary underpinning of all Walzer's other ideological commitments.

It is worth mentioning that Walzer argues in favor of collective ownership of property as an analogue of collective ownership of public decision-making. In an argument that rehearses the earlier one in *Radical Principles*, Walzer insists that the maxim, "*What touches all should be decided by all*"⁷⁷⁰ must be interpreted so as to outlaw the "private government" that is private ownership of enterprises that essentially subject their workers.⁷⁷¹ Walzer considers industrial democracy to be every bit as much of the sphere of politics as is government as traditionally understood.

3. Membership

As I mentioned earlier, membership is the first "sphere" to be discussed in *Spheres of Justice*. Walzer's arguments about membership are idiosyncratic, as well as being indicative of his thought as a whole. It is also crucial to his argument: he ends the first chapter of *Spheres* with the claim that, "The community is itself a good – conceivably the most important good – that gets distributed."⁷⁷² Briefly summarized, Walzer argues in chapter 2 of *Spheres of Justice*, as well as in "The Distribution of Membership," that every political community must have the right to determine who it wishes to admit as a member, so long as it grants the existing members the right to emigrate and recognizes the claims to asylum of people who "are persecuted or oppressed because they are like us." The latter is because, "Ideological as well as ethnic affinity can generate bonds across political lines."⁷⁷³ Other asylum seekers do not have to be admitted, because "the right to restrain the flow [of refugees] remains a feature of communal self-determination."⁷⁷⁴

The last sentence gets us to the heart of Walzer's theory of membership. On his account, the right to control the membership of the community is a crucial part of the right to collective self-determination, of a piece with the right to self-defense. If states had to admit whoever wished to join them, then there would be no such collective right. To non-members, a community owes "hospitality, assistance, and good will" in accordance with "the principle of mutual aid."⁷⁷⁵ It does not owe non-members a place in the community unless it wishes to grant it to them.

However, Walzer claims that the asymmetry between the right to immigration and the right to emigration is matched by an asymmetry between admissions and naturalization policy. In his account, every person who is admitted must be granted the right to become a full member in the community. Guest worker programs are illegitimate unless the guest workers are offered a path to citizenship in the host country because guest workers are "excluded from the company of men and women that includes other people exactly like themselves. They are locked into an inferior position that is also an anomalous position; they are outcasts in a society that has no caste system."⁷⁷⁶ Guest workers are members of the community in fact, and needy members at that because of the poverty of their material condition and status, and thus deserve to be formally recognized as members. Refusing to grant guest workers the status of citizens "looks very much like tyranny: it is the exercise of power outside its sphere, over men and women who resemble citizens in every respect that counts in the host country, but are nevertheless barred from citizenship."⁷⁷⁷ The important point, for Walzer, about guest workers, is that they participate in the community without being granted political rights.⁷⁷⁸ Yet, as we saw a page ago, "What touches all must be decided by all." The political decisions made by the community touch guest

workers, and touch them every bit as deeply as they do anyone else, and so much be decided by the “all” that is made up of both citizens and guest workers.⁷⁷⁹

The most noteworthy point about Walzer’s writings on membership, and what makes it a theme of his thought, is that membership questions are neither to be answered with reference to the need of individual people nor in accord with some set of human rights. Rather, membership is a feature of collective self-determination. It is, in effect, a piece of Walzer’s defense of democracy as continual and ongoing argument. This is especially obvious in Walzer’s insistence that all residents must be allowed to become citizens. It is also present in his denial of any right to membership. He states that, “The distinctiveness of cultures and groups depends upon closure and, without it, cannot be conceived as a stable feature of human life.”⁷⁸⁰ Remember that a pluralist society is one in which people associate freely and, as a result, establish different forms of social life. So, under conditions of free association, pluralism results. This means that the practice of democracy results in distinct cultures. Hence, the denial of the right to membership is in part a defense of democracy.

The restriction of membership is, like the dedication to external pluralism, linked to Walzer’s defense of democracy. It is also one of the more obvious-seeming communitarian features of Walzer’s thought, because the right being protected – that to self-determination – is a collectively held right, while the right to membership, which is being refused, is an individual right. Walzer therefore appears to be privileging communities over individuals. He would probably counter that the right to self-determination is actually an individual right collectively held and not a communal right: the community has no right to self-determination unless the members of it wish it to have such a right. Indeed, Walzer’s approach to membership is one of the areas, as we shall see, in which his attempt to reconcile liberal values with a commitment to socialized democracy is especially evident. As a result, it is a crucial part of the argument about his communitarianism being the result of different traditions coming into contact with each other. We will return to this point shortly.

4. Complex Equality

Complex equality is the combination of which democracy, pluralism, and equality are the major parts. Membership is also important: it is a particular political society that is complexly equal and not any broader group, certainly not humanity as a whole.⁷⁸¹ A society fits the model of complex equality when it is pluralist, which means that the different spheres of social life are autonomous. Rather than politics or economics (or religion or office) being the dominant medium of exchange so that he or she who has a monopoly of political power or of money (or of access to divine grace) can extend his or her monopoly beyond its rightful place, each person’s standing in each sphere is determined by qualities intrinsic to that sphere.

This will be, as Walzer admits in “Liberalism and the Art of Separation”, a “rough” sort of equality,⁷⁸² but it will be equal and not just separately unequal. In making this claim, Walzer relies on two related assumptions, each of which I mentioned earlier. The first is that free association will lead to diverse communities within the larger overall community.⁷⁸³ The second is that the different skills needed for success in each sphere are not transferable to those of another. Walzer argues that, “social meanings and distributions are harmonious only in this respect: that when we see why one good has a certain form and is distributed in a certain way, we also see why another must be different... The principles appropriate to the different spheres are not harmonious with one another; nor are the patterns of conduct and feeling they generate.”⁷⁸⁴

Some might expect that separating the spheres will simply replace the dominance of one good with the several monopolies of a few people. In effect, Walzer counters that those who dominate in a particular sphere are those who have participated in it the most: politics and economics, for example, are diverse communities formed by free association and it is not surprising that those who have developed the skills needed for one prosper at it more than do those who have developed the skills needed for the other. He adds that the woman who is a gifted orator will gain a political advantage but cannot gain an economic one, because oratory is not bargaining. The man who has spent his life practicing how to bargain will necessarily do better at it than our political orator. The fact that I play squash five times a week means that I will beat most people for whom it is not a hobby, but it also means that I do not spend my time playing basketball and hence am not likely to be competitive at it with someone who does.⁷⁸⁵

Even so, one of the features of complex equality is that there is no simple standard by which people's equality can be measured. This is why it is not "simple" equality. In many forms of rights-based liberalism, people's equality is measured in terms of the resources at their disposal. Marxists might want to replace that by equality of welfare. Certain forms of utilitarianism might grant their citizens equal happiness or equal utility. As both Ronald Dworkin and Will Kymlicka argue, a plethora of contemporary political theories base their theories of justice on the equality of the members of society and just disagree about what should be distributed equally. For Walzer, there is no such standard. This is why it is a rough sort of equality. Some social goods are distributed equally: for example, he argues forcefully that the shared understandings of American society are such that healthcare ought to be distributed equally.⁷⁸⁶ Other goods are not. As I noted above, Walzer does not deem it problematic that some people have yachts and others cannot afford them. Likewise, he does not deem it as troublesome – at least from the point of view of justice – that some people are loved and others are not, that some gain the recognition and respect of their peers and others do not.⁷⁸⁷ What, then, if someone wishes to succeed in a particular sphere but has attributes that suit her only to success in another sphere that she does not value? I might wish to be a first-rate mountain climber, but my body type suits me more to squash. Is that a problem when my neighbor both wishes to, and does, excel at swimming?

The point to the questions I raised in the previous paragraph is that many theorists questioned the extent to which complex equality could really be seen to be a form of equality. This was particularly the case with regard to his acceptance of inequalities in the sphere of money and commodities, as we shall see when we discuss *Pluralism, Justice, and Equality*, a set of critical commentaries on *Spheres of Justice*, later in the thesis. Walzer himself admits in *Spheres* that he does not know "by virtue of what characteristic" we are equal and argues that only the book as a whole can answer the question, "In what respects are we one another's equals?"⁷⁸⁸ Most forms of egalitarianism have straightforward answers to that question: we are equal because our needs are equally met, or because we have equal rights, or equal resources, or participate equally in the marketplace and so on. Walzer does not. Nonetheless, there is a sense in which Walzer does answer that question in a straightforward manner. This is when he says that we "acknowledge the moral meaning of complex equality" when we develop a society in which citizens respect themselves enough to want "only the freely given recognition and the honest verdicts of one's peers."⁷⁸⁹ Self-respect is, I want to argue, the closest thing there is to an answer to the question of how citizens of a society in which complex equality reigns are equals. Even then, the equality is one of potential, not of fact. As Walzer says, complex equality "doesn't guarantee self-respect; it only helps to make it possible. This is, perhaps, the deepest purpose of distributive justice."⁷⁹⁰ By "radically disconnecting" status from "every kind of hierarchy," complex equality and

democratic citizenship come as close as a society can, in Walzer's view, to guaranteeing self-respect because,

they make possible a kind of self-respect that isn't dependent on any particular social position, that has to do with one's general standing in the community and with one's sense of oneself, not as a person simply but as a person effective in such and such a setting, a full and equal member, an active participant. The experience of citizenship requires the prior acknowledgement that everyone is a citizen – a public form of simple recognition. This is probably what is meant by the phrase “equal respect”...it is a function of membership, though always a complex function, and depends upon equal respect among the members.⁷⁹¹

What makes us equal, in a complexly equal society is that we participate together in a common endeavor: namely, that of collective self-government. We respect each other as members of that endeavor, as participants in the community of argumentation, and as equally entitled to persuade each other about how we should live our common life. Democratic participation is the key to the equality of complex equality. Citizens of a society that is complex equality get their self-respect from that participation and hence need not respect themselves less if the skill for which the society recognizes them is not the one they would wish it to be.⁷⁹²

I shall shortly argue that complex equality emerged from a combination of support for liberal principles with preference for social democratic outcomes in Walzer's thought. Nonetheless, if the interpretation given above is correct, it is easy to see why it might be deemed a form of communitarianism. For the thing that makes us equal is not something that we desire for individual reasons. Rather, we see each other as equal because of a collective experience – that of citizenship. Furthermore, we prioritize participation in a communal endeavor over our private aims and desires. This is what Walzer would call a socialized form of life⁷⁹³ and it is, indeed, markedly distinct from the picture common in the egalitarian liberalism of the 1970s and 1980s, in which the highest-order interest of citizens was taken to be in framing, revising, and pursuing a conception of the good life. This is especially so because liberals of that stamp frequently maintained that the government ought to be neutral with regard to conceptions of the good life so that individuals could frame them for themselves. The self-respect emanating from equal citizenship is a far cry from that. Walzer would probably regard the idea that our highest-order interest is in choosing our own conception of the good life as “a mythic invention” or “a bad sociology.”⁷⁹⁴ If that makes Walzer a communitarian, then his complex equality is indeed a form of communitarianism. However, it could equally be described as a form of social, or socialized democracy, of civic republicanism, or of perfectionism.

5. Political theory and its standing in the community

Walzer's political theory is in certain ways a paradoxical enterprise. In particular, he argues in “Philosophy and Democracy” that philosophical truth has no authoritative status in a democracy and seems critical of the philosopher who arrives bearing the gift of his truth to present to those in power, yet, two years later and in a work bearing many of the same hallmarks, Walzer appears to do just that. What status does Walzer intend the argument of *Spheres of Justice* to have?

In answering that question, it perhaps instructive to think about what Walzer says of his methodological toolkit at the start of *Spheres*. According to Walzer, he draws upon history and anthropology, where John Rawls uses economic and psychology.⁷⁹⁵ Rawls is presumably the paradigmatic of the philosopher in “Philosophy and Democracy,” given his status in political theory at the time. Even before he gets to the acknowledgements, Walzer states that his “argument is radically particularist. I don’t claim to have achieved any great distance from the social world in which I live.”⁷⁹⁶ So, bearing “Philosophy and Democracy” in mind, we might say that Walzer does not intend his arguments in *Spheres* to be understood as philosophical truths. From history, we learn how our shared understandings came into being and an awareness that they were once different from what they are now. From anthropology, as from sociology, we learn the radical contingency of social arrangements. Doing these two things is part of Walzer’s remit as a social critic. Rather than presenting us with a truth from outside, he sees himself as interpreting “to [his] fellow citizens the world of meanings that we share.”⁷⁹⁷ This is why he points out that a just or egalitarian society is possibly only if it is “already here – hidden, as it were, in our concepts and categories”⁷⁹⁸ and why he goes to such lengths to insist that his particular political positions are not (or not just) philosophically correct but are the best interpretation of what our shared understandings really are.

This is most notably the case with his argument about medical care. In his discussion of the American welfare state,⁷⁹⁹ Walzer makes explicit three principles that undergird his entire argument about the sphere of security and welfare. These are that “every political community must attend to the needs of its members as they collectively understand those needs; that the goods that are distributed must be distributed in proportion to need; and that the distribution must recognize and uphold the underlying equality of membership.”⁸⁰⁰ Using those principles, Walzer develops the argument that medical services must be provided communally and that the communal provision must provide to all members equally and in ways that respect their membership.⁸⁰¹ As he recognizes, this is very different from what the USA actually provides to its citizens and it might appear that the shared understanding is that “a minimal standard for everyone... and free enterprise beyond that” should be the mode of distribution of health care.⁸⁰² Indeed, some critics of *Spheres of Justice* made precisely that argument, as we shall see when we discuss *Pluralism, Justice, and Equality*, and the further one that Walzer’s appeal to shared understandings was a democratic mask for the fact that he really wished to promote his own values.

So, even if Walzer intends his work to be considered as social criticism, or as an entry into an ongoing debate about distributive justice within the USA, the question as to the status that the arguments are supposed to have remains. We will ultimately be able to answer these questions only in the next chapter, because Walzer provides much more detail as to his position on them in *Interpretation and Social Criticism* and in *The Company of Critics*. Here, only a couple of points are apposite. First, it does not appear plausible to suggest that Walzer suggests his work to carry the status of an opinion like any other, which is what he says should be the status of philosophical arguments in “Philosophy and Democracy”. If that were his intention, he would do better to state them in a public political forum and not have them published in book form by an academic publisher and with epigraphs from a plethora of established public intellectuals such as Daniel Bell, Judith Jarvis Thomson, and Charles Taylor on the back as well as a statement that the book’s author is a “Professor of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study”. An entry into political debate that makes such a point of the credentials of the opinion holder could easily be seen as an illegitimate boundary crossing, an attempt by the opinion holder to use his

office or recognition to gain greater prestige for his opinion. At the same time, academic books rarely have much impact on political debate, even if we accept what Walzer says about the status of political theory at the start of “Philosophy and Democracy.”⁸⁰³ It makes more sense to think of Walzer’s argument as an entry into a debate about distributive justice among academics.

So, the second point about its status is that even if it intends to shift the understanding of the status of philosophical argument from discovery of timeless truth to interpretation of shared understandings, critics of Walzer might still claim that political theorists are not the best judges of what a set of shared understandings really is or, at any rate, that the appropriate forum for such a judgment ought on Walzer’s view to be the political community and not the academic one. Is the attempt to supply an account of what our shared understandings really require us to do with regard to distribution really that much more in accord with the priority of democracy over philosophy than is the attempt to work out the philosophical truth about distributive justice?⁸⁰⁴ Walzer has an answer to these questions, but it did not appear in print in detail until 1987 and so we will postpone consideration of that answer for now.

6. Liberalism, socialism, and democracy

In the discussion of the ideological themes that concludes this section of the chapter, I make the argument that Walzer had come by the early 1980s to see himself as reconciling aspects of liberal and socialist thought, while prioritizing democracy over both of them and that it was this combination of elements that led to his thought being deemed communitarian. In section IV of the chapter, I will argue that Walzer’s communitarianism was a result of working through dilemmas that arose when he sought to reconcile the tenets of radical democracy with the philosophical insights of the School for Ethical and Legal Philosophy. In section V, which concludes the chapter, I will suggest that the two arguments are in a way different versions of the same claim.

Before I make this argument, let me stress that there is an important distinction between the terms being considered. In the case of liberalism, socialism, and democracy, they are terms applied by Walzer himself. It is his version of democracy – in other words of political debate acted out in accordance with the rule of reasons – that is prioritized over the individualized pluralism that he saw as an attractive tenet of liberal thought and the egalitarianism of socialism. I do not seek to make any claims about the essence of liberalism, socialism, or democracy, whatever those essences may be, and simply use the terms as I take Walzer himself to use them. Communitarianism is different. That is not a term that Walzer used himself in the early 1980s as either self-description or point of opposition. Rather, it was a term applied to him as well as to other critics of Rawlsian liberalism – especially to Charles Taylor, Michael Sandel, and Alasdair MacIntyre - who emphasized the social construction of identity and the atomized individualism that they saw in Rawls’s theory of justice. In considering whether Walzer is a communitarian, then, we will have to consider what that label was supposed to mean. Walzer himself does not use the term in *Spheres of Justice*, although in 1990 he did write an article discussing communitarianism and liberalism in which he took an ambivalent attitude towards the label, arguing that communitarianism made two contradictory critiques of liberalism, neither of which could be true in their entirety but each of which was partially true.⁸⁰⁵ As a result, Walzer deemed communitarian criticism doomed to perpetual return.⁸⁰⁶

By now, we have, I think, detailed Walzer’s conception of democracy fairly exhaustively. In the discussion of “Liberalism and the Art of Separation,” I offered an account of his conception

of the relationship between liberalism and socialism that is, I think, correct in outline, and what remains is to fill in the detail. Remember that in that article Walzer takes from liberalism the importance of the art of separation, and hence of pluralism, and seeks to offer a socialized version of that art in which we “do not separate individuals; we separate institutions, practices, relationships.”⁸⁰⁷ Walzer adopts what he takes to be an important liberal insight and to re-jig it so that the insight can be understood in socialized terms. In a sense, this is what he does throughout *Spheres of Justice*. One of the meanings of pluralism in that book is the separation of institutions, practices, and relationships – but not of individuals, except in so far as the institutions, practices, and relationships of the sphere of social life in which individuals principally move form them. This is what I have called internal pluralism and it is, we can see, the socialized version of the liberal insight about the importance of drawing boundaries between different parts of the social world. Now, in Walzer’s theory, a socialized version of liberalism is itself democratic socialism. We can see this in his claim that, “Liberalism passes definitively into democratic socialism when the map of society is socially determined.”⁸⁰⁸ The different spheres of complex equality are of course socially determined: it is not individuals who decide when the sphere of money and commodities meets the boundary of the sphere of security and welfare, but society. Thus, in complex equality the “map of society” is socially determined. Complex equality is, therefore, definitively a form of democratic socialism and not of liberalism. Yet it is a liberal form of democratic socialism in that its pluralism - with equality, one of the two things that *Spheres* sets out to defend – is derived from a principle that liberal has often urged and socialism often denied, namely the importance of the art of separation. So, the argument of *Spheres* is like that of “Liberalism” in make a democratic socialist argument based on at least one liberal foundation. As the article is in many ways a continuation of the argument of the book, this is hardly surprising.

It might seem as though Walzer’s egalitarianism is derived from socialism without taking much from liberalism. This is both for the obvious reasons that its acceptance of social inequality was historically one of the things that made liberalism most susceptible to socialist criticism and that Walzer’s early self-identification was as both an egalitarian and a socialist, and because Walzer’s argument in favor of democratic control of firms may seem to many to warrant an interference in the marketplace far beyond that which liberalism could mandate. In *Spheres*, Walzer reiterates the argument that he had previously made in *Radical Principles* that entrepreneurs are no more entitled to own factories than they would be to own towns.⁸⁰⁹

However, we should not be too quick to accept that Walzer’s commitment to equality does not derive from at least some liberal insights. This is, first, because he sees his enterprise as one of social criticism and can hardly deny that the shared understandings of American society are in many important senses liberal.⁸¹⁰ As we saw earlier, Walzer starts *Spheres* by saying that if a just and equal society is not already implicit in our practices, then it cannot possibly be established. So, he must see some form of social equality as implicitly accepted by certain types of liberalism. Secondly, it is worth considering the structure of Walzer’s argument in favor of democratic ownership of factories. Remember that he makes the argument by a prolonged analogy between factories and towns. His point is that the two are not different in the senses that are relevant to questions of ownership. The argument that towns could not be owned but must be democratically run was one of the first liberal arguments against feudalism and, as Walzer points out, a central feature of Supreme Court decisions relating to Pullman, Illinois.⁸¹¹ It can plausibly be argued that what Walzer does in arguing in favor of democratic ownership of factories is seek to defend a democratic socialist conclusion by the deployment of liberal principles. As was seen

above, this is what was done with regard to pluralism in both *Spheres* and “Liberalism and the Art of Separation.”

In other words, in the early 1980s Walzer defended a form of (democratic) socialism that sat “alongside of and sometimes conjoined with liberal politics.”⁸¹² This was, indeed, somewhat similar to the argument about the relationship between liberalism and socialism that he had already made in *Radical Principles*. Liberalism and socialism are, for Walzer, overlapping entities. They are not identical but both draw on similar traditions of thought. And, of course, another similarity between them is that each must cede priority to democracy when a majority decides on something not in accordance with either liberal or socialist principles. This is, of course, the argument of “Philosophy and Democracy” and the conclusion of “Liberalism and the Art of Separation.”

7. Communitarianism

I now want to argue that it is this particular weighting of the elements of democracy, socialism, and liberalism that makes Walzer appear communitarian. It is also, I suspect, why authorities have had so much difficulty deciding whether the label applies to him. To understand this, we need to consider some of the elements that have been said to make up a communitarian. A comprehensive list is almost impossible. I shall rely on the themes suggested by Stephen Mulhall and Adam Swift in their analysis of communitarian thought in the 1980s.⁸¹³ According to Mulhall and Swift, communitarians object to five elements of the liberalism of Rawls (and Ronald Dworkin, Joseph Raz, and Richard Rorty). These are: the liberal conception of the self; the asocial individualism of liberal theory; liberalism’s universalism; liberalism’s claims to objectivity; and its insistence on state neutrality between different conceptions of the good life as opposed to the “perfectionist” promotion of a particular conception that communitarians are said to advocate.⁸¹⁴ I will argue that, in so far as these claims apply to Walzer’s political theory and above all to the theory of complex equality, they do so because of his attempt to draw a picture of democratic socialism that relies on foundations that are either liberal or not objectionable to liberals.

This is most obviously the case with universalism. Of course, Walzer is indeed opposed to claims to universalism since they conflict with his (external) pluralism. That is one of the central arguments of both “Philosophy and Democracy” and *Spheres*. I said earlier that Walzer’s external pluralism does indeed seem to be communitarian in certain ways but that it is equally plausibly described as democratic. Walzer defended this type of pluralism, as we saw, on the grounds that members of a democracy who valued their participation in the decision-making procedure by which they determined their common life, and who had a sense of empathy, would respect the right of other communities to enjoy the procedures of their choice. The advocacy of pluralism as opposed to what Mulhall and Swift call universalism was supposed to take into account the fact that philosophical truth does not have a right to impose itself on a recalcitrant community even if what it seeks to impose is right. Of course, that argument can be called communitarian because it seeks to defend the right of the community to decide on its common life. My intention is not to apply a “correct” label to Walzer’s theory but to explain its elements. As he might put it, even if there were a philosophically correct definition of communitarianism, Walzer would retain the right to define his theory otherwise or to explain how he came to this theory. In the case of the defense of pluralism against universalism, Walzer is committed first and foremost to defending the rule of reasons and the right to participate in political life. These

are rights that are themselves highly valued by most contemporary liberals. So, Walzer's pluralism is not antithetical to liberalism but actually draws in its defense on liberal values.

A similar point might be made with regard to objectivity, although this is not so central a topic of Walzer's thought.⁸¹⁵ As with claims to universalism, Walzer may well dispute the possibility of philosophical objectivity, but he does not need to do so to dispute its value in political theory. Remember that he did not dispute the possibility of a philosophically correct answer to the question of how welfare should be distributed, but just insisted that the philosophically correct answer was not universally applicable. Similarly, the arguments of *Spheres* and the other pieces of work in the complex equality research program do not really touch on the question of whether philosophers and political theorists can achieve an objective standpoint, but they do argue that such a standpoint is unimportant. At the start of *Spheres*, as we saw, Walzer deliberately eschews such a standpoint in favor of interpreting the world of shared meanings to his fellow citizens. This is why his argument is "radically particularist."⁸¹⁶ Walzer does not say that the attempt to achieve the objective standpoint is impossible. Rather, he says that it is unnecessary. This is both because justice can only be achieved if it is already "hidden" or implicit in our social life and because an objectively correct answer must give way before a subjectively persuasive one in a democratic setting.

Those two aspects of Walzer's "communitarianism" can therefore be interpreted rather as democratic or republican ones. Walzer wishes to restrict the scope of philosophy in political life and valorizes popular participation in its place. The other three themes that Mulhall and Swift talk about all relate more closely to Walzer's attempt to "socialize" liberal insights so as to convert liberalism into a variant of democratic socialism. In "Liberalism and the Art of Separation," as we saw, Walzer argues that liberals have misinterpreted the complexity of modern life because they sought to separate individuals rather than to uphold the integrity of institutions. He preferred to focus on separating the spheres of social life because that would avoid the atomization of individual human beings by "socializing" institutional settings. Here Walzer clearly does what Mulhall and Swift say communitarians do and oppose the asocial individualism of liberal theory. In doing so, he also opposes the liberal conception of the self or what he calls the "mythic invention" that is the "liberal hero, author of self and of social roles."⁸¹⁷ Yet each of these points of opposition is clearly intended to defend democratic socialism. This is why Walzer argued that once such a process of socialization of institutions had occurred, and the asocial individualism and liberal self been exposed as myths, liberalism would pass into democratic socialism. Of course, each of society and community stands in opposition to individual in an ordinary lexicon of terms in use in political theory. Nonetheless, society and community are not synonyms and that means that Walzer can criticize both those tenets of liberal theory without being a communitarian.

Yet it is also worth remembering that Walzer does not intend to reject liberal theory outright when he points out the flaws in its sociology that lead to the mythic invention of the self-authored individual; indeed, his argument draws on the key liberal insight that separation between spheres of social life is important. This argument is one that socialists often oppose. So, in one and the same article, Walzer makes social democratic arguments that could also be made by communitarians and offers a critique of socialism. Given that the one argument could be either communitarian or socialist and the other is not socialist, it is easy to see why "Liberalism and the Art of Separation" appears to be communitarian. If it is communitarian, however, it is so because in it Walzer attempts to reconcile liberalism and democratic socialism by combining certain principles from each ideology while rejecting other tenets of them both. The complicated

mixture of elements in Walzer's theory make complex equality a good term for that theory in more ways than one.⁸¹⁸

IV

Having provided an account of the major themes of Walzer's thought in the early 1980s, I now want to consider how his thought had developed over the years. This section, in other words, considers the historical development of Walzer as a writer. I seek to do two things. First, I argue that when Walzer appears to be a communitarian that is because his thought carries elements drawn from the contradictory traditions that are the analytic philosophy of the School for Ethical and Legal Philosophy and the radical democracy of *Dissent*. The major development in Walzer's thought in the early 1980s was the increased importance of the School as a source of research topics. Secondly, I argue that Walzer's thought developed but did not rupture and do this by showing how *Spheres of Justice* is compatible with *Just and Unjust Wars* and pointing out some ways in which the argument about complex equality developed out of *Radical Principles*.

Before doing that, I want to point out one seeming oddity about Walzer's thought. In *Spheres of Justice*, Walzer provided a defense of conscription by arguing that it was a form of dangerous work that the members of the community ought to share.⁸¹⁹ Yet, in 1982, one of the chapters of *Obligations* was republished as "Political Alienation and Military Service"⁸²⁰ in which Walzer is highly critical of conscription. In it, he concludes that conscription "is morally appropriate only when it is used on behalf of, and is necessary to the safety of, society as a whole, for then the nature of the obligation and the identity of the obligated persons are both reasonably clear. But the state must rely on volunteers and can only hope...that committed citizens...will choose to come forward."⁸²¹ The development of Walzer's thought in the years between 1970 and 1983 had no doubt led to a difference of emphasis on the question of conscription, but the articles are not irreconcilable with each other. Part of the difference comes from the nature of the books in which the works were published. *Spheres of Justice* is an attempt to work out what the common understanding of justice is, while *Obligations* focuses on what is required of individual human beings. More importantly, in the passage in *Spheres*, Walzer appears to assume that the other aspects of a just society are in place, which is not the assumption in *Obligations*. Hence Walzer writes in *Spheres* that the "moral purpose" of conscription is "to universalize or randomize the risks of war over a given generation of young men" and that it is for this reason that it is a form of work that "citizens are required, or required each other, to share."⁸²² In *Obligations*, Walzer had argued that the "myths of common citizenship and common obligation...cannot be allowed to determine the actual commitments of actual men and women."⁸²³ To recap, *Obligations* is a piece of social contract theory and argues that people's obligations arise only from their actual consent and not from tacit consent. For this reason, the clause in between the commas in the passage from *Spheres* is crucial to understanding how the man who wrote the passage in *Obligations* could have come to write the passage in *Spheres*. Almost incidentally, Walzer suggests that a better way of thinking about conscription is that it is something that we require of each other, not something that is fostered upon us from up on high. The argument of *Spheres* is markedly different from that of *Obligations*, but much of that difference comes about because of Walzer's assumption in the later book that citizens view each other as partners in a common enterprise. Were it not for this, I

suspect that he would have remained less sanguine about conscription than he had become by the early 1980s.

1. The complex equality research program as an amalgamation of traditions

That the School for Ethical and Legal Philosophy was increasingly important to Walzer's thought in the early 1980s is undoubted. The topic of *Spheres of Justice* – distributive justice – is the one that dominated the attention of the School, and the tradition of thought of which it was a part, at that time. Furthermore, both “Philosophy and Democracy” and “Liberalism and the Art of Separation” are on similar topics and each was published in *Political Theory*, in some ways the flagship journal of the intellectual tradition that the School drew upon. By the early 1980s, the central tradition in which Walzer was working was one that was pretty close to the Anglo-American mainstream, even though his relationship with that tradition was, as he notes in the *Imprints* interview,⁸²⁴ always uneasy.

There was a development in Walzer's thought in the early 1980s, but we should not exaggerate the change that that development signified. First, it is to be remembered that *Spheres* developed out of a course that Walzer taught with Robert Nozick at Harvard in 1970. Although the argument produced in the book is doubtless a significant development from the lectures given in the course, the basis of it is similar. Furthermore, “In Defense of Equality” was published as early as 1973, and again in *Radical Principles*, and that clearly shows that the bedrock of the argument of *Spheres* was broadly in place a full decade before the book was published. As I noted in the previous chapter, “In Defense of Equality” already talks about distributive spheres and argues that goods should be distributed in accordance with principles internal to the distributive sphere of which they are a part. This brings us to the second reason not to exaggerate the development of Walzer's thought, which is that evidence of the influence of the School for Ethical and Legal Philosophy can be seen in much of his work in the 1970s, too. We cannot see much of it in *The Revolution of the Saints*, in *Political Action*, or in *Regicide and Revolution*, and even in *Obligations* that influence is unclear. Then again, as I said earlier, the School does not seem to be a major influence on the argument of *Exodus and Revolution*, which was published just a year after “Liberalism” and two years after *Spheres*. Moreover, the School's influence is clearly present in *Just and Unjust Wars*, which for all its use of historical examples is essentially a piece of applied ethics, and in *Radical Principles*. As Walzer himself said, much of *Spheres* simply reworks ideas that were originally put forward in *Radical Principles*.⁸²⁵

The third reason is that at no point in his career did Walzer sever his ties with the other traditions of thought that had influenced his early career. Although the historicized idealism of his teachers at Harvard did decline in influence as his career progressed, the radical democracy of Irving Howe and Walzer's other comrades on *Dissent* did not.⁸²⁶ That is manifest from the general scope of his work, as his contributions to *Dissent* and the *New Republic* in the early 1980s makes clear. It is also, as I shall now argue, true of his work that is in conversation with the analytic tradition that the School represented. A simple point makes this clear: the articles that made up *Radical Principles* were, for the most part, first published in either *Dissent* or in the *New Republic*. Those articles formed an early influence on the argument of *Spheres*, so we would be mistaken if we made too much of the difference between Walzer's academic and his popular writings. Many sections of *Spheres* itself are re-workings of pieces that appeared in unlikely sources for a work of analytic political theory. The most noteworthy of these are the sections on dirty work, which was first published in *Harper's Magazine*⁸²⁷ – a publication that is

closer in style and content to *The Economist* than it is to *Political Theory* – on the gift relationship, which first appeared in *Dissent*,⁸²⁸ and on primaries versus local party caucuses, which was in the *New Republic*.⁸²⁹ Walzer continued to combine political theorizing with political advocacy in the early 1980s.

Substantively, I want to suggest that one of the reasons why Walzer's egalitarianism was so difficult to categorize ideologically, and why it appeared communitarian, is that it did not develop out of a "school" of Anglo-American academic political theory, but out of Walzer's political activism and his work on *Dissent*. We can see this partly by considering the topics that Walzer wrote on: hard work and free time are not prominent topics for analytic political theorists, but they are topics about which activists are often concerned. We can see it, secondly, in his choice of academic discipline: at least in the early 1980s, history and anthropology were indeed less common tools of political theorists than were economics and, to a lesser extent, psychology. It seems highly doubtful that Walzer got the idea of using as examples Israeli kibbutzim⁸³⁰ or the San Francisco Scavengers,⁸³¹ or even the date,⁸³² from the School for Ethical and Legal Philosophy. The things that Walzer considers essential in a discussion of an equal society are everyday political concerns such as the principle that should govern placement of children in schools or whether entrepreneurs ought to be allowed to set up towns and factories that they operate as possessions. They are not, or at least not primarily, such abstract issues as the degree of economic inequality that can justly be tolerated. I suspect that it is for this reason that, although Walzer continued to use gendered language on occasion, gender and the family was a topic of concern for him in *Spheres* somewhat earlier than other it was for other male Anglo-American theorists.⁸³³

It is Walzer's concern with the "lived experience" of equality that makes some of his arguments appear unusual to academic political theorists. Consider, for example, the furor, over the suggestion that distribution of money and commodities does not have to be equal if those things are confined to their own sphere. As we shall see, this suggestion led many critics to argue that complex equality was not egalitarian at all. Yet Walzer could easily retort that so long as the inequality only enabled the rich to collect such luxuries as yachts, it is indeed more important to those with less money that they not be denied leisure time or made to seem ineligible marriage partners than that economic inequalities be organized so as to benefit the least advantaged group in society. Above all, the focus on lived experience is closely linked to the prioritization that Walzer gives to his particular conception of democracy as ongoing, engaged argument. In his view, we would be more likely to see each other as equals were we all to conceive of ourselves as partners in the common enterprise that is citizenship.

My intention is not to justify Walzer's complex equality but to explain it. My point is that because participation in political debate as an ongoing feature of an equal society was not especially high on the priority list of liberal egalitarians at the time that Walzer wrote *Spheres of Justice*, it appeared more as a communitarian than as an egalitarian point. In fact, however, it is simply a point drawn from the egalitarianism of the activists on *Dissent* and similar publications rather than from that of the School for Ethical and Legal Philosophy. Thus, the complex equality research program, of which *Spheres* is of course the primary component, combines the egalitarianism of American radical democrats with the research agenda and theoretical tools of the School. What appears to be a communitarian argument is actually, to its creator at any rate, the result of bringing into conversation activism with analysis. This does not mean that it is not communitarian, whatever that means, but it does explain why Walzer's brand of communitarianism was so hard to categorize. None of MacIntyre, Taylor, and Sandel was

originally a writer and editor for *Dissent*, or activists in the anti-Vietnam War movement in the USA. Even when Walzer develops critiques of liberalism similar to theirs, the intellectual sources of those critiques is different or, at least, more varied.⁸³⁴

2. The relationship between *Spheres of Justice* and *Just and Unjust Wars*

Political theorists have often wondered about how the man who wrote a theory of the just war premised on the defense of individual rights could just 6 years later eschew almost all talk of individual rights when talking about distributive justice. The wonder becomes all the more perplexed when the author later goes on to make further arguments about the morality of war that again employ human rights.⁸³⁵ Brian Orend makes this point in his book about Walzer. The alleged lack of compatibility of *Just and Unjust Wars* and *Spheres of Justice* might surprise international relations scholars who picked up a book on contemporary political theory and saw Walzer described as a communitarian, because he is also known as a communitarian in international relations theory, with (it seems to me) more justice in the latter case.

Walzer explains the reason why he does not rely on rights in the preface to *Spheres*. He argues that,

the theory of justice in war can indeed be generated from the two most basic and recognized rights of human beings – and in their simplest (negative) form: not to be robbed of life or of liberty. What is perhaps more important, these two rights seem to account for the moral judgments that we most commonly make in time of war. They do real work. But they are only of limited help in thinking about distributive justice.⁸³⁶

In other words, he considers rights talk an inappropriate way of theorizing about distributive justice because the rights in question are more numerous, more controversial and more “local and particular in character.”⁸³⁷ The subject of the just war makes for universalizing talk because the rights in question are almost universally recognized. The subject of distributive justice must be pluralist and particular, because the rights are conceived differently in different societies, as indeed are the goods to be distributed. Walzer later gave a more complete account of that argument about the dichotomy between the universal applicability of certain rights and the particularism of others in *Thick and Thin*⁸³⁸ and we shall discuss that account in a later chapter. The important point is made explicit by the title of that book: according to Walzer, there is a “thin” universal morality, which covers such things as the right not to be killed, on top of which is a “thick” morality that is particular to each time and place.

So, on Walzer’s account, if *Just and Unjust Wars* takes a different approach to the question of the applicability of moral judgments outside the culture in which they were formulated to that of *Spheres of Justice* that is because the difference in the topics under discussion mandates that difference. There is a sense then in which the two works are compatible precisely because of their seeming incompatibility. Dealing as they do with different aspects of social life, they use different principles to analyze their topics. As the Walzer of *Spheres* might have explained, this is a prime example of evaluating spheres of social life in accordance with principles appropriate – and, perhaps, internal - to the sphere in question.

I want to add that there is another sense in which the two arguments are compatible. It is that, in each case, Walzer attaches significant importance to the process of democratic debate and

argument and gives it priority over philosophical reflection. As I said earlier, the term “communities of character,” which he uses to justify his opposition to humanitarian intervention in all but the most egregious cases of massacre, could easily be used as a justification of the pluralism of *Spheres*, especially what I have called its external pluralism. In *Just and Unjust Wars* and in “The Moral Standing of States,” Walzer argues that military intervention in favor of a set of human rights is almost always to be opposed, in large part because such an intervention would interfere with the right of collective self-determination of the state being intervened in. Had “Philosophy and Democracy” been written before *Just and Unjust Wars*, then I suspect that it would have been much more readily apparent that the argument Walzer makes about self-determination in *Just and Unjust Wars* is essentially analogous to the one he makes about the democratic right to institute a philosophically incorrect answer to the question of distributive justice in *Spheres* and in the articles about complex equality. In each case, Walzer insists that philosophers cannot enforce the implementation of their truth at the expense of a recalcitrant political community. This is one of the reasons why Walzer is seen as a communitarian in both international relations and political theory and why, in both fields, he could just as easily be seen as the defender of a particular conception of the importance of democracy. It is important to bear in mind that it is precisely his conception of democracy that makes the danger of political majorities overriding the “rights” of minority groups less serious a threat to Walzer than it would be to human rights theorists. For Walzer, democracy is ongoing argument that is never definitively settled. The situation can always be changed. This is why he does not deny outsiders the right to seek to persuade a political community to change its rights-denying policy, just as he does not deny philosophers – who Walzer sees as self-imposed outsiders – the right to try to change a community’s distributive policy. He merely insists that they do not impose that change from outside.

There are, then, two different ways in which Walzer’s just war theory and his complex equality can be seen to be compatible. On the questions that each must supply an answer to, that answer is the same. On those questions that apply only to one of the theories, it is hardly surprising that the answers differ. Why should the theories give the same answer to different questions?

V

In concluding this chapter, I want to do two things. First, I will point out the importance of the early 1980s, and above all of *Spheres of Justice*, to Walzer’s career. Secondly, I will explain why the argument that I offered about Walzer’s communitarianism in sections III and IV of the chapter are in many ways the same argument put in different ways.

Spheres of Justice remains the major work in Walzer’s career. It set the agenda for much of his work in the decade that followed it and beyond. *Interpretation and Social Criticism* develops the methodological approach advocated in *Spheres*, and *The Company of Critics* is a practical application of that methodology. In *Thick and Thin*, Walzer is still grappling with the question of the relativity of justice with which he concluded *Spheres*. Even in *Politics and Passion*, the search for a “more egalitarian liberalism” owes at least something to Walzer’s move in *Spheres* towards seeking to reconcile liberal and social democratic theory. In other words, *Spheres* is a turning point in Walzer’s career, but it is not a sea change. Walzer’s work develops but does not rupture. The significance of *Spheres* is that it marks Walzer’s main entry in the central debate in American political theory of the era. It is an entry that reflects Walzer’s

movement towards a new tradition without simultaneously being a movement away from the older ones. The use of history, anthropology, and (although it is unaccredited) sociology show the continued influence of Beer and Walzer's other graduate advisers, as well as that of Howe, whose influence is also evidence in Walzer's commitment to equality and to focusing on live issues in the politics of his day in the quest for equality. In the spheres of education, political power, and office, Walzer develops themes already found in *Radical Principles*. Although the relationship between *Spheres* and Walzer's other major work, *Just and Unjust Wars*, is not an easy one – as is demonstrated by the fact that Walzer drops almost all reference to rights in *Spheres* – the works are, as I just argued, highly compatible. In short, Walzer's work develops, but it does not rupture. Given the nature of many of his arguments, and, I suspect, of his personality, that is hardly surprising. He is, after all, the man who argued in "A Theory of Revolution," which we talked about when discussing *Radical Principles*, that an evolutionary approach to social change was revolutionary.

In the early 1980s, Walzer remained committed to a form of social democratic politics, although he did not mention that by label as frequently in *Spheres of Justice* as he had done in *Radical Principles*. Nonetheless, "Liberalism and the Art of Separation" is explicitly an argument in favor of what Walzer calls democratic socialism and that article is both a major entry into what I have called the complex equality research program and in many ways the sequel to *Spheres*. Walzer appears to be a communitarian because he defends a form of equality markedly different to that of the liberal egalitarians of the School for Ethical and Legal Philosophy, namely one that relies on a socialized conception of what it means to be equal. I have already said that his communitarianism is both the result of building a form of democratic socialism on liberal principles and the result of constructing an analytic argument grounded on egalitarian principles. I want now to suggest that that argument is really the same thing put in different ways. Walzer's commitment to democratic socialism is inseparable from his background in American radical democracy. That in itself is made up of his political activism of the 1960s and 1970s, of his work for magazines such as *Dissent* and the *New Republic*, and above all of the influence on Walzer of Irving Howe. So, to say that Walzer introduces into a piece of analytic-style political theory certain social democratic principles not familiar to the analytic tradition is, essentially, to say that Walzer introduces into that theory the influence of Howe et al. In short, he combines the two traditions. On the other hand, the analytic tradition, at least in the form it took in Walzer's involvement with it in the School for Ethical and Legal Philosophy, is the very source of some of the liberal principles and working methods that Walzer sought to ground his democratic socialism on. Remember that in "Liberalism" he tries to accept the liberal insight into the importance of the art of separation and convert it into a form of democratic socialism by focusing on the socialization of that art. So, to say that Walzer's democratic socialism draws on liberal insights is essentially to say that it draws on some of the concepts and tools that Walzer learned from the School. Therefore, to say that Walzer's communitarianism is a result of the combination of liberal insights with socialist and democratic principles is in essence to say that it is a result of bringing the traditions of analytic philosophy and American radical democracy into conversation with each other.

Chapter 4: The Essayist as Public Intellectual, 1986-1992

I: Introduction

By the late 1980s, the increased output that Walzer's research position at the Institute for Advanced Study enabled him to produce had become something of a flood. In 1986, he published eight pieces of work including three articles in edited collections,⁸³⁹ two in *Dissent*,⁸⁴⁰ one in the *New Republic*,⁸⁴¹ and one in an academic journal.⁸⁴² The final piece was an introduction to the new edition of Isaiah Berlin's examination of Tolstoy's view of history, *The Hedgehog and the Fox*.⁸⁴³ In 1988 and 1991, Walzer published seven pieces of work, and in 1992 he published nine things, including his first collection of essays in a foreign language.⁸⁴⁴ As the author of *Spheres of Justice*, then widely seen as the first fully-fledged theory of justice from a communitarian perspective, Walzer was invited to contribute to myriad edited collections and to comment on numerous debates and symposiums. By the late 1980s, Walzer was one of the USA's foremost public intellectuals and most prominent essayists.

Yet what might seem striking to someone perusing Walzer's bibliography is that the late 1980s did not produce a single piece of work of comparable theoretical scope to either *Just and Unjust Wars* or *Spheres of Justice* (or, for that matter, of *Radical Principles* or even of *Obligations*). Walzer published three books in the years between 1986 and 1992, yet one⁸⁴⁵ was a printed version of three *Tanner Lectures on Human Values* and comes to barely 100 pages in length, another⁸⁴⁶ was a collection of four essays on vaguely related topics written over a 20-year period that is not much longer, and the third,⁸⁴⁷ although on the same scale as the earlier works, is a collection of biographies. Had Walzer run out of theoretical insights? Did the theory of the just war and the idea of complex equality exhaust his contribution to political theory? Is this why he devoted himself to essays and commentary?

I shall argue in this chapter that what Walzer had actually done in his earlier work was to set himself a research agenda and that his publications in the late 1980s followed that agenda. Each of the three books he wrote between 1986 and 1992 was in important ways a deeper exploration of some of the themes raised by *Spheres of Justice* and the same is true of such articles as "Justice Here and Now," "A Critique of Philosophical Conversation," and "The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism"⁸⁴⁸. For example, *Interpretation and Social Criticism* is, despite its brevity, of the utmost importance to an understanding of Walzer's political theory, because in it he fleshes out his understanding of the method appropriate to the discipline that he had touched upon in *Spheres of Justice*. In *Spheres*, Walzer argued that political theorists should not seek to leave "the cave" but should interpret to their fellow cave dwellers the world of shared meanings that they already inhabit. Walzer's task in *Interpretation and Social Criticism* is to explain why interpretation is preferable to such standard approaches to political theory as invention and discovery and why it is still a critical, not a conservative or justificatory, enterprise. The book, in other words, serves to justify the methodology of *Spheres of Justice*. *Interpretation and Social Criticism* is not as original a work as is *Spheres*, because it fleshes out an older argument rather than advancing a new one, but it puts important meat on the bones of the methodology advocated in *Spheres*.

Likewise, *The Company of Critics* adds detail to *Interpretation and Social Criticism* by providing that practical examples that Walzer sees as essential if his argument is to be complete. In his own words, *Interpretation* "was more of a philosophical statement; in [*The Company of Critics*] I am concerned with history and politics. That was a general discussion of the critical

enterprise; this is a more focused discussion of twentieth-century criticism.”⁸⁴⁹ Where *Interpretation* explains how Walzer thinks social critics should behave, *Company* explores how recent critics have behaved. This is slightly too simple a distinction, because *Interpretation* does conclude with a chapter exploring the social criticism of the biblical prophets (above all, of Amos), while *Company* includes a theoretical introduction and conclusion. Nonetheless, we might say that where *Just and Unjust Wars* was “a moral argument with historical illustrations,” *Interpretation* is “a philosophical argument with an historical illustration” and *Company* is “historical illustrations of a philosophical argument”. Were Walzer to have combined the two into one book, we would have the grand theoretical statement of the critical enterprise akin to *Just and Unjust Wars* and *Spheres of Justice*, a “defense of connection and radicalism” that is also “a philosophical argument with historical illustrations”.

What It Means to be an American also continues the work of *Spheres of Justice*, albeit in a different vein to the other two books. Here Walzer is concerned to elucidate the shared understandings of the contemporary USA, in particular as these relate to civil society, to pluralism, to citizenship, and to cultural difference. The book is one of several works by Walzer that apply the argument of *Spheres* in the specific context of the world in which Walzer lived at the time.⁸⁵⁰ Walzer focuses mostly on the American context, but particularly in his discussions of the revitalized notion of civil society prevalent in Eastern Europe following the demise of communism, also on a comparison with Europe.

In short, Walzer spent much of the late 1980s and early 1990s exploring two prominent aspects of what I have called the “complex equality research program”, namely, its methodology and its institutional application. Other applications of the research program are in Walzer’s writings on citizenship,⁸⁵¹ which extends the discussion of membership found at the start of *Spheres of Justice*, and on equality and the tensions between liberalism and communitarianism.⁸⁵² In so far as that tension relates to Walzer’s attempt to work through his position on universalism and particularism, the subject of the seeming tension between his ethics of war and his complex equality, it relates to his methodological writings and to his other Tanner Lecture, “Nation and Universe,”⁸⁵³ in which he introduces the notion of “reiterative universalism”, which will loom large later in the chapter.

“Nation and Universe” is an important publication because “reiterative universalism” is a major link between the complex equality research program and the other two research programs that Walzer spent his time continuing to work on in the late 1980s and early 1990s. One of these is that laid down by *Just and Unjust Wars*, and which we can call the ethics of war research program. Unlike in the first half of the decade, this research program was a rival to complex equality for Walzer’s time and energy, but unlike the late 1970s, it was not the source of his major publications. Nonetheless, Walzer found time to explore further his notion of the supreme emergency and its relation to the ‘dirty hands’ dilemma,⁸⁵⁴ the morality of the Gulf War,⁸⁵⁵ the ongoing crisis in the Middle East,⁸⁵⁶ and the ethical response to terrorism.⁸⁵⁷ He also published a second edition of *Just and Unjust Wars*; albeit, little was changed from the first edition except for the foreword addressing the Gulf War.

The other relevant research program is Walzer’s research into the history of Judaism. We already discussed *Exodus and Revolution* in the previous chapter and that was to remain Walzer’s major contribution until well into the 1990s. Nonetheless, “Nation and Universe”, by focusing on the question of the nature of the Jewish claim to be God’s “Chosen People”, continued the research, as, for that matter, did the essay on Amos and the Biblical Prophets in *Interpretation and Social Criticism*.⁸⁵⁸ Then, in 1992, Walzer published both “The Idea of Holy

War in Ancient Israel”⁸⁵⁹ and “The Legal Codes of Ancient Israel”⁸⁶⁰. The first of the articles is also a contribution to his argument about the just war, with Walzer concerned to argue that alongside the total war that the Israelites waged against the Canaanite tribes at God’s command, there are biblical passages advocating a limited war.

So, although Walzer did not produce any new original contributions to political theory in the late 1980s on the scale of his major works of 1977 and 1983, it would not be correct to claim that he had run out of insight. Rather, as he entered the second half of his career, he focused on detailed exposition of three of the main research agendas that he had set himself towards the end of the first half. In the morass of publications flowing from him in that time, there is a surprisingly strong set of related topics being explored. Walzer responded to global events, in particular to the collapse of the Soviet bloc and to the Gulf War, but he did so in ways characteristic of his general thought. This was to become most obvious at the end of the period, when he used the anti-Soviet demonstrations in Prague in 1989 to develop his notion of the moral minimum,⁸⁶¹ which was to form the central argument of *Thick and Thin*, the key text of chapter 5 of the thesis. In that text, Walzer seeks to explain the relationship between the ethics of war research program and the complex equality research program. There is, I believe, a clear vision underlying Walzer’s political thought that will make that argument, when we come to it, no surprise. Anyone who reads many of Walzer’s texts will, by the time they come to the late 1980s, see the same arguments appearing and reappearing in slightly different ways in multiple texts. This makes the account of the relationship between “moral argument at home” and “moral argument abroad” seem obvious. But before we can see why that is, we must explore in further detail what the nature of those arguments is. This chapter, then, in some ways serves as a bridge between chapters 2 and 3, which explain Walzer’s vision of moral argument at home and of moral argument abroad, respectively, and chapter 5, which explains the relationship between the two.

As in previous chapters, I start by outlining the arguments of the major texts, then turn to group those arguments into thematic consideration, and conclude with an account of the overall development of Walzer’s thought in the period in question and a summary of the argument of the chapter.

II: Texts

1. “Justice Here and Now” and “The Long-Term Perspective”

“Justice Here and Now” is the first of a series of articles that Walzer wrote in 1986 on the nature of the just society in the contemporary USA. I will focus on it, for the most part, as it is the most comprehensive account of the “necessary features of distributive justice in the United States today” that Walzer produced.⁸⁶² Given that more than 20 years have elapsed since Walzer wrote this article, we need to think about what he means by the word “today”. In fact, Walzer’s account of “our lives, values, and common practices”⁸⁶³ should not be subject to reinterpretation on the grounds of shifting political majorities. To see why this is so, it is worth noting that, also in 1986, Walzer argued in “The Long-Term Perspective” that “nothing short of a national service will meet and match the American interest in health care.”⁸⁶⁴ In that article, Walzer repeats the argument he had advanced in *Spheres* that national, socialized medicine is a requirement of justice because of the particular understandings of the contemporary USA. In Medieval Europe, justice would not have required socialized medicine, because the shared understandings of that

society did not make a long life “the central purpose of its citizens.” On the other hand, the social provision of religious “instruction and inspiration” was a requirement of distributive justice in Medieval “Christendom.”⁸⁶⁵

What Walzer adds to the argument about health care in “The Long-Term Perspective” can be gleaned by consideration of the title of the article. The shared understandings with which he is concerned are not those of a day, a year, or even perhaps a decade. Indeed, he emphasizes that the shift from the Medieval focus on eternity to the contemporary focus on longevity was “an extraordinary cultural transformation.”⁸⁶⁶ Only such transformations can cause the relevant shifts in shared understandings that would alter the requirements of distributive justice. Shifting political majorities do not do so, which is why he felt it so important “in these days of Reaganomics, when we seem so far away from anything like [a national health service], to continue to suggest it as an appropriate model, to keep alive some coherent idea of what it might mean for the government to attend to the medical interests... of its citizens.”⁸⁶⁷ Walzer added this argument, I suspect, because much of the critical commentary on *Spheres* had claimed that it was strange to suggest in 1983 that the shared understandings of US public life committed it to socialized medicine.⁸⁶⁸ The purport of Walzer’s retort is that shared understandings do not change so easily as the post-war consensus melts into the era of “Reaganomics”. Given that, we are safe in assuming that most of the requirements of distributive justice stipulated in “Justice Here and Now” and in related articles such as “The Long-Term Perspective” still hold at the end of the first decade of the 21st century.

This is not to say that Walzer holds political developments to be irrelevant to the work of political theorists. That would be a strange conclusion to be drawn from the man who wrote that “the unavoidable risk of democracy” was the overriding of certain shared understandings. Rather, Walzer takes the task of the political theorists to be to describe a society “different from but also deriving from our own society”⁸⁶⁹ and the task of “Justice Here and Now” is to draw an outline of such a society.⁸⁷⁰ The just society will be an improvement on the injustices of the contemporary world but will not be a Hemingway-esque “clean, well-lighted place”, because it is a “great mistake” to “acquiesce in descriptions of the welfare state as a kind of war against the inevitable and ultimately comfortable messiness of human society.”⁸⁷¹ For Walzer, there must be room for “chance and risk,” for local and voluntary welfare services alongside the coercive apparatus of the state.

The requirements of justice are, for Walzer, four principal things: first, “a shared economic, social, and cultural infrastructure,” so that citizens are enabled to participate in highly valued social activities;⁸⁷² secondly, communal provision to cover those who are not enabled by the enabling infrastructure (in other words, a system of welfare provision);⁸⁷³ thirdly, equality of opportunity, including a lessening of the vicissitudes of the “rat race”;⁸⁷⁴ finally, a “strong democracy,” such that “political power is widely available to citizens.”⁸⁷⁵ Underlying all these things, Walzer says, is the importance of what he terms “political justice”, in other words, that each of the features of distributive justice be “decided politically, though always with reference to shared understandings that are themselves worked out through deeper social processes.”⁸⁷⁶ This caveat about the applicability of the requirements of justice in the contemporary USA enables him to finish on a note similar to that of “Liberalism and the Art of Separation”. He concludes that, “justice requires that justice itself be democratically at risk”⁸⁷⁷ because, for all its substantive distributive implications, democracy itself operates in practice as a procedural allocation of power, namely that election is the crucial power-allocating mechanism.

As a result, “Justice Here and Now,” like those articles discussed in the previous chapters, presents a Walzerian argument to the effect that the USA is committed in its shared understandings to some form of social redistribution that is probably more akin to that of a socialist than of an egalitarian liberal state, because part of the redistribution involves socializing American institutions, but that that socialist redistribution ultimately must take a back seat to the democratic process. Theorists can maintain the arguments for social provision, as Walzer did throughout the 1980s, but their arguments are but opinions among others in the world of opinion. To take a specific example, Walzer argues with regard to equality of opportunity that the “slogan” is misunderstood when “it is taken to legitimize the familiar forms of competitions – as if the goals of the competitive race are given, and only the number and the handicaps of the runners are at issue.”⁸⁷⁸ Rather, opportunities are neither fixed nor responsive to individual preference, so it would not be unjust “if we were to discourage ambitions for the higher forms of capitalist ownership...[to] tell ambitious bureaucrats that they can climb the institutional ladder only so far...[to] tell ambitious entrepreneurs that they can enrich themselves only so far.”⁸⁷⁹ In the spheres of office, money, and political power, equality of opportunity unleashes “strong anti-authoritarian tendencies” that tend to limit the opportunities available. Equality of opportunity is more realizable when “the slope of ambition and advantage is less steep.”⁸⁸⁰ The rat race is not conducive to equality of opportunity and for that reason it must be countered. Walzer concludes that, “If we are committed to equal opportunity, then, we would do best to reduce the steepness of the slope of advantage.”⁸⁸¹ As it stands, this is a classic democratic socialist critique of liberal individualist defenses of meritocracy, but the closing pages of “Justice Here and Now” make it clear that Walzer’s critique is democratic first, and socialist only second. It is concerned with the distribution of political power first and only then with the distribution of material resources. For putting justice democratically at risk means that, “your favored conception, **or mine**, of infrastructural priorities, or the necessary forms of welfare, *or the nature of available opportunities*, or the division of this or that factory’s profits, may be rejected.”⁸⁸² Walzer does not intend his account of equality of opportunity to become prevalent in the USA unless a political party elected at the ballot box implements a program inspired by his account. This is because justice cannot be achieved by “the enactment of a single philosophy of justice, but rather of this philosophical view and then of that one, insofar as these views seem to the citizens to capture the moral realities of their common life.”⁸⁸³ Only the citizens have the right to mandate programs of redistribution such as those Walzer advocates in his four points.

This is not to say that Walzer closes “Justice Here and Now” by taking back what he had said earlier about the requirements of justice. Indeed, in the penultimate sentence of the article he reiterates that, “Justice requires that we do all these things,” before adding, “but it also requires that we do them democratically.”⁸⁸⁴ In other words, justice can require a particular set of social arrangements, even when it is unjust to implement that set of arrangements. The philosopher may have access to a correct account of justice, but must accept its supersession by an “incorrect” democratic majority. The task of “egalitarian philosophers” is, Walzer insists, to “provide a **persuasive** interpretation of democratic citizenship and then of the goods and opportunities that citizens distribute to one another – I mean American citizens, here and now, who rightly have the authoritative...word.”⁸⁸⁵ Philosophers must persuade; they cannot justly coerce.⁸⁸⁶ (Remember that, in “Philosophy and Democracy” and other articles considered in the previous chapter, one of the predominant themes of contemporary philosophy was, in Walzer’s view, its coercive tendency. We will see more of this in “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation.”)

However, “Justice Here and Now” shares with Walzer’s other articles from the period a caveat about the untrammelled workings of democracy that is reflected in the line I quoted above about how justice should be worked out democratically, yet “always with reference to shared understandings that are themselves worked out through deeper social processes.” I take this to imply that democratic citizens are not, in Walzer’s view, acting justly when they vote or campaign in accordance simply with the pursuit of self-interest; rather, our decisions are supposed to reflect our best understanding of what the shared understandings of our society are. This is why Walzer concludes “The Long-Term Perspective” by arguing that, when focusing on “preventive medicine and primary care, we enter a world where we really know, all of us... what ought to be done.”⁸⁸⁷ Likewise, in “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments,” Walzer argues that when assigning particular goods to different social sectors, the assignation is entirely free except for “the sole constraint... that they not be unjust.”⁸⁸⁸ That turns out to require balancing between the sectors akin to the balancing between social spheres in *Spheres*.⁸⁸⁹ This hint of something like a neo-Rousseauian account of citizenship virtue will recur later in the chapter.

2. “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments” and “Socializing the Welfare State”

This pair of articles, the former written in 1986 and the latter in 1988, I take to be the earliest statement of what Walzer was later to call the “civil society argument.”⁸⁹⁰ What links the two is the emphasis on the importance of holding “sectors” of society in balance with each other.⁸⁹¹ The balancing of spheres is, of course, an argument that Walzer had started to make long before 1986; in fact, it predates by a decade the publication of *Spheres of Justice* in 1983. The new move that Walzer makes in “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments” is to emphasize the role of the “social sector” as the locus of cooperation, and its importance in balancing both state and market.⁸⁹² “Socializing the Welfare State” advances a similar argument in its defense of what Walzer calls “nationalized distribution,” when Walzer argues that because “every state preys on the society it protects... socialization is the necessary correlative of nationalization.”⁸⁹³ In each case, Walzer seeks to introduce to contemporary political theory consideration of parts of our society that do not fit into the category of either public or private.

Indeed, the question that Walzer poses at the start of “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments” is how to draw the line between public and private. He argues that the public-private divide is too “simple”. The former term is too “narrow” because it excludes everything other than the state, when many enterprises are “undertaken in public for public-spirited reasons” and yet “have nothing to do with the state.” Nonprofit activities are the most immediately recognizable example, but “noncoercive” ones are, says Walzer, “perhaps more important.”⁸⁹⁴ The term “private” is problematic because it is “too wide, extending from personal and familial life all the way to the market, though the market is surely a public place, shaped by public norms and legally regulated.”⁸⁹⁵ Walzer proposes that before we can assign things to sectors of society, we must delineate four such sectors: the family, the market, the state, and the social sector. (However, it is noteworthy that Walzer then leaves aside the family because, although we “do make assignments to the family,” in “current debates, [it] is mentioned only occasionally, in moments of piety.”⁸⁹⁶) Each sector has its characteristic mode of interaction: “calculation” in the market, “coercion” in the state, and “cooperation” in society. The last is the “preferable” mode, which is the inspiration of the “promise of a reintegrated civil society;” however, Walzer argues, in our world we cannot do away with state and market. The theory of social assignments serves to provide direct support toward the cooperative sector to enable it to balance the other two.⁸⁹⁷

To the experienced Walzer reader, the structure of the theory is the novel part of it, the detail less so. For example, Walzer states of the assignments that we must “begin by reflecting on the particular activities and the different sectors, on the meanings they have in our society” and argues that, “No single principle will divide up the universe of goods and services.”⁸⁹⁸ In other words, the article continues the complex equality research project by following *Spheres* in arguing that what Walzer now calls “social assignments” and elsewhere calls distributive principles must be based on reasons “internal” to the good or sphere in question and that there must be a plurality of principles covering the distribution or assignation.

Likewise, Walzer’s account of the utility and limitations of both market and state closely follows similar arguments made in *Spheres*. The market is useful because it “makes for a largely noncoercive coordination” of commercial activities and is efficient, but it is also a place of “social irresponsibility and environmental damage” and the remedies internal to the market do not protect individuals.⁸⁹⁹ More importantly, the market fails to integrate individuals in any meaningful way; thus, although it reflects societal norms, it fails to provide a forum in which people can express communal interests or a capacity for common “moral engagement.”⁹⁰⁰ The state sector is useful because of three features that the market does not have: it is an arena of solidarity, of democratic responsibility, and of public performance.⁹⁰¹ Solidarity beings, theoretically, with “market failure” but when we acknowledge “the mutuality of membership” it extends to “constructive public goods” such as public education.⁹⁰² The utility of democratic responsibility is, of course, one of Walzer’s major recurring arguments and one that we discussed just above in relation to “Justice Here and Now”. Here Walzer emphasizes its operation as a limit on privatization: because coercion must be “defensible in public,” nothing can be privatized unless it is “wholly voluntary” in private. “Wherever coercion is necessary, so is democratic responsibility.”⁹⁰³ An arena in which public performances can be made is “a value in itself” because some people “want to perform in public” and seek our “recognition” in a manner not available in the market.⁹⁰⁴ Yet, useful as these three features of the state sector are, they are all somewhat mitigated by the most characteristic feature of that sector: namely, that it is one of coercion. The social sector is, in Walzer’s view, also “marked by solidarity, responsibility, and performance in public,” but “the communal background to all this is wholly determined by voluntary association.”⁹⁰⁵

So, the theory of social assignments prefigures the argument about the socialization of the welfare state because it concludes with an argument for “socialization” or the “complex” replacement of “public officials or private entrepreneurs with freely associated citizens.”⁹⁰⁶ This argument reiterates Walzer’s suggestion that welfare services can be provide by organizations other than the state and his defense of worker-owned factories, which he here dubs “socializing productive activity.”⁹⁰⁷ The social sector cannot completely replace the state for the reason of democratic responsibility, but a “strong social sector strengthens democratic responsibility.”⁹⁰⁸ In an argument that prefigures many of the claims of *What It Means to be an American*, Walzer concludes the essay on social assignments by arguing that the degree to which assignments can be made to a social sector depends on the solidarity of the political community. In a nation-state, assignments to the social sector are less likely to be made because without “ethnic or religious pluralism, voluntary initiatives are intermittent or weak.”⁹⁰⁹ Yet Walzer also offers a different gloss on an argument made in *Spheres*, when he argues that assignments should be made in such a way as to balance the sectors. As I quoted above, the ideologies of each sector fail to take account of the victims of each sector standing alone. This is why each sector must be balanced: “Taken in combination...the three sectors provide opportunities for each other’s victims.

Members of minority groups prosper on the market; parties, movements, churches, and civil liberties unions, organized in the social sector, proclaim the rights of dissidents and minorities and offer them a home; the state provides social security for unemployed and unassociated citizens.”⁹¹⁰ I made a great deal of Walzer’s claim in *Spheres* that there is nothing that can be done for someone who is not loved. In “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments,” Walzer makes clear exactly what he means by this. The person who is not loved will not now gain love but the balancing of sectors will grant him or her happiness in other sectors of human life.

“Socializing the Welfare State” extends the argument in favor of non-state provision of welfare in the name of a system of socialized distribution. Walzer starts by stating that the welfare state should be seen as a “system of nationalized distribution” and proceeds to draw an analogy between it and nationalized production.⁹¹¹ His purpose is to show that we can see why the welfare state has run into problems for reasons similar to those affecting the nationalized industries of the European political economy. The welfare state is analogous to nationalized industries because, in each case, what has happened is that “Certain key social goods have been taken out of private control” so as to be provided by law for certain citizens.⁹¹² Nationalized industries take production out of private control and place it in the hands of the state. However, moving something from the market sector and placing it in the hands of the state reflects, in Walzer’s view, the failure to adequately distinguish among the social sectors. As he said in “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments,” private and public do not exhaust society’s sectors. The result of this failure of characterization is that state-run industries have run into problems because of being too similar in managerial design to private industries.⁹¹³ In each case, the workers are not involved in the management of the factory, so the “relations of production have not been transformed.”⁹¹⁴ This is not quite true of welfare recipients, who now receive aid as a legal entitlement not charity, as “citizens” rather than as “paupers.”⁹¹⁵ Nonetheless, welfare recipients remain in the “old patterns of dependency” albeit “reconstituted as new patterns of civil clientage.”⁹¹⁶ The welfare state has failed to “institutionalize and perpetuate the helpfulness born of collective crisis.” This can be done only if distribution is socialized in the form of “collective help”. The welfare state must be socialized so that more people become distributors as well as recipients of welfare and so that “ordinary citizens at or near the point of reception” are empowered.⁹¹⁷

In other words, the problems of the welfare state can be solved if civil society is “enhanced” by state activity. Welfare must be both nationalized and socialized and the two must be held in balance against each other, for the reasons Walzer outlined in *Spheres*, “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments” and elsewhere.⁹¹⁸ When welfare is socialized, then we are more likely to think of a “welfare society”,⁹¹⁹ because recipients are active as well as passive engagers in the welfare process. As an example of what that might mean, Walzer considers the “War on Poverty” of the 1960s, which he takes to be “the most recent effort to socialize the welfare state.”⁹²⁰ However, the effort failed because it focused on “decision making” and not on “implementing” and so became a struggle between “radicalized professionals and middle-class organizers” and “established professionals and lower-middle-class politicians.”⁹²¹ Mass participation in welfare services could, in Walzer’s view, take place at both the levels of service delivery and management of services; indeed, the former might constitute a form of training for the latter.⁹²² The most important purpose of socialization is to provide new ways for people to “help themselves and each other”. In the ideal welfare society, there would be a “multitude of networks and institutions for mutual aid;” in other words, a plurality of welfare services governed by different principles of welfare.⁹²³ The welfare society would however, operate

alongside but not controlled by the welfare state, which retains its importance because of the principle of democratic responsibility.

3. *Interpretation and Social Criticism*

The fact that Walzer was invited to give the Tanner Lectures in Human Values is a strong sign of his prestige as a political theorist in the mid-1980s. As might be expected, he took the opportunity to provide his most important theoretical contribution of the period, in the form of a detailed defense of why theorists should criticize their society and not stand back from it (chapter 1), and why they retain critical force when doing so (chapter 2). Walzer seeks to “provide a philosophical framework for the understanding of social criticism as a social practice.” It is for this reason that *Interpretation and Social Criticism* is the “theoretical preamble” to *The Company of Critics*.⁹²⁴ Only with the framework, or preamble, in place could Walzer go on to the study of criticism as practiced in the twentieth century.

It could equally be said that the first two chapters of *Interpretation* are the theoretical preamble to the third, in which Walzer considers social criticism as practiced by the biblical prophets. That chapter is, structurally speaking, as much a part of *Company*, but because the context with which it is concerned is so different, it would have been out of place in that book. Furthermore, it was written at “roughly the same time” as the first two chapters. However, it is worth noting that whereas the first two chapters were given as Tanner Lectures at Harvard University in November 1985, the latter chapter was, a day later, read to Harvard’s Hillel House, presumably in front of a largely student audience.⁹²⁵ An earlier version was delivered at a symposium at Drew University, but that symposium was on prophecy and not on “human values.”⁹²⁶

In the first essay, “Three Paths in Moral Philosophy,” Walzer argues that the “path” of interpretation “accords best with our everyday experience of morality” when compared to the paths of “discovery” and of “invention.”⁹²⁷ A few points are immediately worthy of note: first, Walzer displays the continuing influence of the traditions of both Beer and Howe in stipulating that interpretation is to be preferred because it accords best with everyday morality. His argument here is similar to that at the start of *Spheres* about why political philosophers should stay in the cave; indeed, *Interpretation*, taken as a whole, is intended to justify cave dwelling. True, Walzer also tries to defend interpretation against the charge that it is “a bad program for...moral experience,”⁹²⁸ but to him that seems to be of secondary importance, whereas for many members of the School for Ethical and Legal Philosophy, it would be the primary criterion by which a political theory should be judged. Secondly, as readers may well have noticed, the language I have used to describe the discipline with which Walzer is engaged is different to his own. Drawing on *Spheres* and most of Walzer’s other works, I have talked of political philosophy; here, he is attempting to delineate the appropriate method for moral philosophy. Finally, Walzer seems to suggest that ranking the paths is both possible and desirable, and ignores or downplays the possibility of walking along two or more of the paths simultaneously, although as we shall see that will not turn out to be true at all stages in the argument.

The path of discovery is, it appears, Walzer’s least favorite path. This is his description of the path, which is known best from the major world religions: “someone must climb the mountain, go into the desert, seek out the God-who-reveals...The moral world is like a new continent, and the religious leader (God’s servant) is like an explorer who brings us the good news of its existence and the first map of its shape.”⁹²⁹ The paradigmatic example of a philosophy of

discovery is that of Thomas Nagel, who in his moral theory searches for “no particular point of view.”⁹³⁰ This is the secular variant of divine morality because God occupies no particular viewpoint and, in both cases, the quest is for something like “objective value” and moral principles that “necessarily govern the relations of creatures like those.”⁹³¹

The great advantage of discovered moralities, according to Walzer, is that they always contrast radically with received wisdom, but that advantage is short-lived because the discovery loses its radical edge once it is supposed to regulate everyday life.⁹³² Indeed, at that point the discovered morality would operate in much the same way that the social critic’s arguments do. What Walzer calls a rediscovered morality seems to be rediscovered by a process of social criticism. More importantly, the principles delivered are going to appear either unremarkable or unrecognizable “as features or ordinary life.”⁹³³ Walzer pooh-poohs Nagel’s discovery of the moral principle that “we should not be indifferent to the suffering of other people” by commenting that, “I acknowledge the principle but miss the excitement of revelation. I know that already.”⁹³⁴ On the other hand, of utilitarianism – a more radical discovered philosophy – he comments that because the outcomes of utilitarian principles are so “radically unfamiliar,” most utilitarians are “[f]rightened by the strangeness of their own arguments.”⁹³⁵ In other words, a discovered morality will either discover the world that we already share and bring out features of everyday life, thus making it merge with the path of interpretation, or it will espouse principles that most people find unacceptable. Nagel’s wisdom is that of the “owl at dusk” and can produce philosophical discoveries, albeit only uncontroversial and weak ones; Bentham’s is that of the “eagle at daybreak” and Walzer finds it “more frightening than attractive.”⁹³⁶

Walzer then turns to the path of invention, for which he takes Descartes as the paradigmatic philosophical founder⁹³⁷ and John Rawls as the major contemporary exponent.⁹³⁸ Invention differs from discovery in that the moral principles are not said to have always been out there, waiting for human discovery but are explicitly acknowledged as the creation of the philosopher. The inventor imitates “God’s creation rather than the discoveries of his servants.”⁹³⁹ Unlike the discoverer, the inventor explicitly seeks to dispense with the existing moral world and to redesign a new one. So, most inventors start with “a design of a design procedure,” or a particular methodology that should, in the inventor’s eyes, lead to agreement on the principles to be adopted.⁹⁴⁰ This is what makes Rawls the contemporary inventor par excellence. (It is worth noting that Rawls is not an inventor in all the senses in which Walzer uses the word, because his principles of justice are not supposed to dispense altogether with existing moral principles but to find a reflective equilibrium between the principles that emerge from the design procedure and the principles intuited prior to the design of that procedure). This is because in his theory of justice, “it ceases to matter whether the constructive or legislative work is undertaken by a single person or by many people. Deprived of all knowledge of their standing in the social world, of their interests, values, talents, and relationships, potential legislators are rendered, for the practical purposes at hand, identical.”⁹⁴¹ By “liberating” the participants in the design procedure from “the bonds of particularism,” Rawls and other inventors seek a “rational outcome” or “a moral world so designed that all of them are prepared to live in it, and to think it just, whatever place they come to occupy.”⁹⁴²

Invention is likely to be more radical than discovery in the principles that it espouses because the design procedure lends legitimacy to the principles to be adopted. Furthermore, the intent is to “create a morality against which we can measure any person’s life, any society’s practices.”⁹⁴³ This is, for Walzer, where the path of invention fails. For, in measuring the practices of other lives and practices, inventors must provide a “universal corrective” that overrides values that

have been “created by conversation, argument, and political negotiation” or, in other words, by what Walzer elsewhere called the “rule of reasons.”⁹⁴⁴ In the language of the complex equality research program, the inventor is like the philosopher who seeks to impose his or her principles and thus overrides the democratic process. In showing why this would be unjust, Walzer develops a “caricature” of Rawls’s original position.⁹⁴⁵ In this caricature, we imagine travelers meeting in neutral space and developing a set of principles by which they can cooperate. Walzer accepts that Rawls’s design procedure of denying the travelers’ knowledge of their cultures is useful for these purposes and goes as far as to assume that there is a single answer to the question of which principles they would adopt.⁹⁴⁶ What he denies is that those principles should govern the travelers once they return home, given that at home they already have a shared moral culture. Those who wish the travelers to continue to abide by the morality of cooperation seem confused:

it is as if we were to take a hotel room or an accommodation apartment or a safe house as the ideal model of a human home. Away from home, we are grateful for the shelter and convenience of a hotel room. Deprived of all knowledge of what our own home was like, talking with people similarly deprived, required to design rooms that any one of us might live in, we would probably come up with something like, but not quite so culturally specific, as the Hilton Hotel. With this difference: we would not allow luxury suites; all the rooms would be exactly the same...But...we might still long for the homes we knew we once had but could not longer remember. We would not be morally bound to live in the hotel we had designed.⁹⁴⁷

Walzer does not intend to deny the importance of the hotel or, to drop the analogy, of basic provision for those in need. So, he continues, the needy “need a universal (if minimal) morality, or at least a morality worked out among strangers. What they commonly *want*, however, is not to be permanently registered in a hotel but to be established in a new home.”⁹⁴⁸ In this passage, as we shall see, Walzer is already anticipating the argument of *Thick and Thin*, to which we return in chapter 5.

However, before he can dismiss invention altogether, Walzer has to consider a different type of invention, which blends with both the other paths. Here the inventor does not seek to construct a new morality but one that “gives us a clear and comprehensive view of the critical force of its own principles.” It is an invention in which we meet with “fellow members in inner or social space” rather than with travelers in outer space.⁹⁴⁹ Walzer does not reject this type of invention; rather, he points out that its focus eventually turns out to be the same as that of the philosopher of interpretation, because both worry about “ourselves, our own principles and values”.⁹⁵⁰ Furthermore, both inventors and interpreters take where we are to be “*someplace of value*”.⁹⁵¹

So, finally, Walzer turns to an explanation of the path of interpretation. Its central argument is that “neither discovery nor invention is necessary because we already possess what they pretend to provide.”⁹⁵² We already inhabit a moral world, which albeit being “disorganized and uncertain” is nonetheless authoritative for both philosophers and regular inhabitants of that world.⁹⁵³ Why? First, because discovered and invented moralities “always turn out, and always will turn out, remarkably similar to the morality we already have. Philosophical discovery and invention (leaving aside divine revelation) are disguised interpretations; there is really only one path in moral philosophy.”⁹⁵⁴ Yet this is not quite right because, as Walzer notes again, utilitarianism is an example of a genuinely novel philosophy. So, his second argument is that

moral argument as we experience it is best understood as being interpretive: “What we do when we argue is to give an account of the actually existing morality. That morality is authoritative for us because it is only by virtue of its existence that we exist as the moral beings we are.”⁹⁵⁵ The other paths may attempt to escape this existence but that escape is unnecessary because the critique of our existence is possible with principles immanent to that existence. This will be the argument of the second essay.

In defending the claim that moral argument is interpretive, Walzer argues that the basic question invoked when arguing about morality is not actually, “What is the right thing to do?” but “What is the right thing *for us* to do?”⁹⁵⁶ The first question has no reference and it is unclear how it could be answered. In attempting to answer it, people inevitably turn the question into a more specific question that turns on the features of their shared life. Such questions are “pursued within a tradition of moral discourse – indeed, they only arise within that tradition – and they are pursued by interpreting the terms of that discourse.”⁹⁵⁷ Although the questions are not quite as narrowly put in morality as in law, this does not gainsay the authority of interpretation because moral concerns are themselves more general than legal ones. Furthermore, if we study the historical processes by which moral principles came to be adopted, we will see that “they have been accepted in virtually every human society.”⁹⁵⁸ This sentence is one of the most important ones in all of Walzer’s oeuvre as far as understanding his intellectual development goes. It shows him using the anthropological and historical principles that he espoused in *Spheres* and yet leaning towards the thin universalism of *Thick and Thin*. Anthropological research is of its nature pluralist: we do not assume that particular moral principles are universally valid; indeed the valid principles are unique to the society of origin. However, in practice, societies have moved along similar paths. Hence moral prohibitions,

constitute a kind of minimal and universal moral code. Because they are minimal and universal (I should say almost universal, just to protect myself against the odd anthropological example), they can be represented as philosophical discoveries or inventions... They are in fact, however, the products of many people talking, of real if always tentative, intermittent, and unfinished conversations. We might best think of them... as emergent prohibitions.⁹⁵⁹

It is very important to note that for Walzer the discussions that produce moral prohibitions are always unfinished. This is because of the nature of the democratic procedure: no democratic majority can be so sure of its decision that it closes off the issue for future democratic debate. This point will recur again and again in such articles as “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation” and “Nation and Universe.”

So, the path of interpretation is in a sense a universalist path. However, it is only minimally universalist because the prohibitions “barely begin to determine the shape of a fully developed or livable morality. They provide a framework for any possible (moral) life, but only a framework.”⁹⁶⁰ Only when shared understandings “thicken” in a continuous conversation does a moral culture develop and only then can we have fully worked out moral principles. That is why variations on the universal code are endlessly plural.⁹⁶¹

Interpretation is the preferred path not only because discovery and invention are unnecessary and are likely to be disguised interpretations, but also because each discovery or invention requires further interpretation.⁹⁶² Interpretation is therefore inevitable. The history of morality is not only of groundbreaking “paradigm-shattering” moments of discovery such as those described

in the history of science by Thomas Kuhn but rather of slow transformations. There is a sense in which moral progress exists, but it is best understood as “the inclusion under the old principles of previously excluded men and women. And that is more a matter of (workmanlike) social criticism and political struggle than of (paradigm-shattering) philosophical speculation.”⁹⁶³ That inclusion is the result of reinterpretation of existing principles, rather than of the discovery or invention of new ones.

Walzer concludes the first chapter by anticipating the second, when he stipulates that the process of interpretation is not “positivist” in its reading of existing morality. Rather, everyone is involved in the interpretation of our shared morality.⁹⁶⁴ The best interpretation is not determined by adding all the different ones together; rather the best interpretation is the most persuasive. It will “sometimes confirm and sometimes challenge received opinion.”⁹⁶⁵ When it dissatisfies us, all we can do is to continue to argue about the best interpretation, for democratic citizens are the arbiters of the quality of an interpretation, albeit only temporary arbiters given that the decision can always be remade. As evidence in support of this view, Walzer cites a well-known Talmudic story in which Rabbi Eliezer stood alone against all the other rabbis in his interpretation of a passage from Deuteronomy.⁹⁶⁶ Convinced of the correctness of his interpretation, Eliezer continually calls for naturally miracles to support his case. The carob tree flies into the air, the water flows backwards, and the school walls shake, but on each occasion Rabbi Joshua insists that the objects in question should not interfere in a rabbinical dispute. Eventually, Eliezer asks for divine approval and a voice cries out from heaven confirming the correctness of the rabbi’s interpretation. Even then, Rabbi Joshua retorts, “We are not in heaven.”⁹⁶⁷ Walzer concludes that regardless of who was right substantively, Rabbi Joshua was procedurally correct and that the majority decision could not be overruled by divine interpretation.⁹⁶⁸ In accordance with the rule of reasons, we search for a democratic majority, the members of which “search for the best of the...arguments.”⁹⁶⁹

In chapter 2, “The Practice of Social Criticism,” Walzer is concerned to defend the view that interpretation retains critical force. We do not just justify those in power. Rather, principles of criticism are always immanent in our existing morality. Walzer acknowledges that “the conditions of collective life – immediacy, closeness, emotional attachment, parochial vision” may seem to “militate against a critical self-understanding.”⁹⁷⁰ Many believe that the more we identify with a group, the harder it is to admit when it is wrong. This is why philosophers are so likely to believe that, “Criticism requires critical distance”⁹⁷¹ and to seek emotional and intellectual detachment from membership.

Walzer does not however think that radical detachment is either necessary or desirable. Empirically, it has not been an accurate description of social critics from the biblical prophets to the present day.⁹⁷² Rather, marginality is more likely to motivate criticism, as it makes people “in but not wholly of their society” and results in “ambiguous connection.”⁹⁷³ Marginal figures have reasons to criticize their society that people who are detached do not have. Even marginality is not Walzer’s preferred option, however. Rather, he thinks that marginal and detached figures have a place in “the critical story” alongside “the local judge, the connected critic, who earns his authority, or fails to do so, by arguing with his fellows... This critic is one of us... his appeal is to local or localized principles.”⁹⁷⁴ It is one of the recommendations of this type of critic that it fits the description of the bulk of social critics. More important than this are the answers that Walzer provides to two related questions: Does the connected critic have critical distance and can she be critical using standards internal to the practices of her society?⁹⁷⁵

In arguing in the affirmative for both those questions, Walzer draws heavily upon Marx's argument in *The German Ideology* that "every ruling class is compelled to present itself as a universal class."⁹⁷⁶ In other words, the ruling class must attempt to portray its particular interests as though they were for the benefit of all. They must offer an apology for their domination, and that apology "is of a sort that gives hostages to future social critics. It sets standards that the rulers will not live up to, cannot live up to, given their particularist ambitions."⁹⁷⁷ So as to discourage dissent, the ruling class cannot claim to rule because its rule is in its own interests, but as that is the reason why it wishes to perpetuate its rule, it cannot but act in such a way that social critics can accuse it of hypocrisy. For example, both bourgeois and later Marxist theorists claimed to uphold the cause of "equality," but where French revolutionaries attached a narrow meaning to that word, Marxist and radical critics "delight in 'exposing' its limits...the word has larger meanings...subordinated within but never eliminated from the ruling ideology."⁹⁷⁸ The social critic gains footage when the values that the rulers claim to defend do not appear to be represented in everyday life.

This is not to say that the rulers must be insincere. On the contrary, "If [they] were not sincere, social criticism would have less bite than it does have. The critic exploits the larger meanings of equality, which are more mocked than mirrored in everyday experience...He shows the rulers the idealized pictures their artists have painted and then the lived reality of power and oppression."⁹⁷⁹ I mentioned in the previous chapter how important lived experience was to Walzer's account of equality; here we see it play a crucial role in his defense of social criticism as a practice. It is because equality is not just a concept but also an aspect of our lives that social critics are able to point out when rulers flaunt it in reality while upholding it in theory. The critic may, of course, be unsuccessful in his portrait of the ills of inequality: as in the first chapter of *Interpretation*, the arbiter of success is popular opinion, which Walzer here refers to in the guise of "evocativeness" rather than persuasiveness.⁹⁸⁰

Walzer goes on to claim that every society can be subjected to internal critique and that this is "because of what a moral world is, because of what we do when we construct it."⁹⁸¹ This puts the argument about the ruling class in different terms. According to Walzer, contemporary philosophers are correct to know that it is a "passion for justification" that drives the building of the moral world.⁹⁸² This desire to feel justified is, on Walzer's view "the trigger of moral belief," because we cannot justify ourselves, so we must enter into conversation with other people and this is the start of the development of morality.⁹⁸³ Morality is always experienced as an external standard because we develop it in conjunction with others. As a result, morality is always a critical standard and we do not need to abstract from the morality of our society to achieve critical distance.⁹⁸⁴

There are, therefore, critical standards available in every society. But how can we recognize when a social critic has interpreted morality well? This is the topic of the second half of this chapter. In Walzer's view, there is ultimately no correct interpretation, because "the argument has no end. It has only temporary stopping points."⁹⁸⁵ A convincing interpretation will require some critical distance – albeit measured in inches – but not as conventionally understood.⁹⁸⁶ According to Walzer, the conventional view of critical distance is of something that divides the self and creates a double: one self is "involved, committed, parochial, angry"; the other is "detached, dispassionate, impartial, quietly watching self one" and thus "superior" in that "his criticism is more reliable and objective."⁹⁸⁷ Regardless of whether this is true of self-criticism, it cannot in Walzer's view be true of social criticism, which is always applied towards other people. The social critic "cannot win these arguments by stepping back; he can only speak

again.”⁹⁸⁸ So, the conventional view in which the second self is the superior critic cannot be true, because such a critic cannot “experience those beliefs and motivations in the same way, once he has evacuated the moral world.”⁹⁸⁹ If we are not attached to any particular place, how can we develop the passion required to defend a particular set of values?⁹⁹⁰ We become social critics by being put into the opposition: “The critic takes sides in actual or latent conflicts; he sets himself against the prevailing political forces.”⁹⁹¹

The social critic takes for her space the ground in between the detachment of the philosopher and the engagement of those whom Marx and Sartre alike deemed “traitors”.⁹⁹² Both in certain ways seek to encourage us to step back from society, whereas all that is needed is “to step away from certain sorts of power relationships within society. It is not connection but authority and domination from which we must distance ourselves.”⁹⁹³ Walzer explains how critical distance operates in his conception of it by means of an analogy:

Age and youth both make for critical distance; the uncritical years presumably come in between. But the principles of the old and the young are not distant, and they are certainly not objective... What makes criticism possible, or relatively easy, for both of these groups is a certain quality of not being involved... in the local forms of getting and spending... willingly or not, both groups stand a little to the side. They are, or they can be, kibitzers.

A little to the side, but not outside: critical distance is measured in inches.⁹⁹⁴

The old and the young are, after all, still members. If they were not members, they would not be able to criticize and would not have sufficient incentive to do so. What makes for social criticism, then, is marginalized attachment. Social critics are better capable of upholding the values of their society, whereas disconnected critics, such as philosophical inventors and discoverers, are likely to press “toward manipulation and compulsion,” because the desire to be effective and implement criticism encourages “an unattractive politics.”⁹⁹⁵ This is because asocial criticism, as a form of “external intervention” is by its nature a form of coercion.⁹⁹⁶ In concluding the chapter in this way, Walzer echoes much of his earlier work, in particular “Philosophy and Democracy,” in which he had argued that universalist philosophers tended towards coercion. This suspicion of that mode of philosophy may as yet seem under-argued, but we will see a much more fully developed picture of it in the discussion of “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation.”

That, then, is the picture of why interpretive social criticism is the preferred path in moral philosophy and why it succeeds in being critical. The third lecture in *Interpretation* is entitled “The Prophet as Social Critic” and gives an account of biblical prophecy, in particular of the prophet Amos, as being Walzerian social critics. I will pass over this chapter more briefly, as much of the argument about the practice of social criticism is echoed in the contemporary discussion in *The Company of Critics*, while much of the substance on biblical prophecy is reiterated in “Nation and Universe,” as well as in Walzer’s writings on ancient Israel in 1992.

A few points are worthy of note, however. First, Walzer’s approach to history is somewhat akin to that of the epic theorists of the mid-20th century and shows the influence of his Harvard professors, Beer above all. Unlike Quentin Skinner or J. G. A. Pocock, Walzer is comfortable describing practices of a different age in “what is undoubtedly a modern idiom,” as long as he acknowledges that such practices have elsewhere been described differently.⁹⁹⁷ For Walzer, the terms with which we describe the practices do not seem definitive of the essence of the practice.

Social criticism is essentially what Walzer takes it to be regardless of the terms used to describe it.

Secondly, Walzer's choice of Amos as the paradigmatic prophet as social critic demonstrates his commitment to radical criticism, for he takes Amos to be the most radical prophet.⁹⁹⁸ Yet his focus on prophecy is important for another reason: because he takes as the essence of prophecy its status as a "social practice".⁹⁹⁹ By thinking of social criticism as something that develops only in a society, Walzer is able to make the large claim that the prophets were "the inventors of the practice of social criticism."¹⁰⁰⁰ I mention this not so as to consider the historical accuracy of the claim but to point out that although Walzer takes criticism to be a universal possibility, he does not think of it as universally practiced. Indeed, prior to ancient Israel it was not practiced. (By implication, then, there were no social critics in ancient Egypt).

Thirdly, Walzer draws a disjuncture between the message and the practice within which the message was transmitted and debate. Although the prophets invented social criticism, they did not invent their message: "the prophetic message depends upon previous messages. It is not something radically new; the prophet is not the first to find, nor does he make, the morality he expounds."¹⁰⁰¹ In Walzer's idiom, prophets were neither inventors nor discoverers, but interpretive critics. They claimed to uphold the morality that all the Jewish people officially accepted; it was, after all, the one that they had agreed to in the covenant at Sinai. Like the critic Walzer described earlier, the prophets argued that the Israelites were not living up to standards that they formally accepted.¹⁰⁰² They were thus reliant on a "culture of prayer and argument that was independent of the more formal religious culture."¹⁰⁰³

Finally, and most importantly, the message that the prophets preached was not a universal one. The prophets did not claim that foreigners who acted as the Israelites were acting would be worthy of divine punishment, just that the Jewish people were. This is why Jonah is not typical of the biblical prophets, for he preached to non-Jews and hence could not refer to a religious tradition.¹⁰⁰⁴ Yet Jonah is still a prophet of a sort and in understanding why, we can see again how Walzer moves towards the argument in *Thick and Thin*. The prophets did have a thin universal message: "God will punish 'violence' wherever it occurs. But alongside this universalism there is a more particularist message."¹⁰⁰⁵ The message of the prophets is "this-worldly. Theirs is a social and workaday ethic."¹⁰⁰⁶ Prophecy is in this sense akin to the exodus story told in *Exodus and Revolution*.¹⁰⁰⁷ It is focused on a particular place in this world. The prophets seek to uphold the tradition within which they live and to see it placed on a more secure footing. Yet they also revise it.¹⁰⁰⁸ So, the work of the prophets is social criticism in that it consists of, "the identification of public pronouncements and respectable opinion as hypocritical, the attack upon actual behavior and institutional arrangements, the search for core values...the demand for an everyday life in accordance with the core."¹⁰⁰⁹

The account of the dual nature of prophecy – the thin universalism forbidding violence and the thick particularism forbidding economic oppression – is important in the development of Walzer's thought for two reasons. First, as I said, it foreshadows *Thick and Thin*, the key text of our next chapter. Secondly, it helps explain the relationship between Walzer's just war theory and his complex equality. Just war theory forms part of the minimal code, which forbids violence, and can thus rely on such universal moral features as human rights. Complex equality developed out of "a background of multiple and conflicting expectations, rooted in a long and dense social history."¹⁰¹⁰ The prophetic message is a pluralist one because above the minimal standard it invites not "application" but "reiteration".¹⁰¹¹ Each nation could have its prophets but

their message would be different. Similarly, each society could have its debates about justice but the form that justice would take would vary.

4. *The Company of Critics*

This book continues the work started in *Interpretation and Social Criticism*. For the most part, Walzer is concerned to consider particular social critics in the 20th century, so the book resembles chapter 3 of *Interpretation* much more closely than it does the first two chapters. It is, as he said, the political statement of the philosophy of *Interpretation*. In other words, in *Company*, Walzer attempts to show that social critics actually can and have practiced their art in the way in which he advocates. He seeks to show, but this time by practical example rather than by theoretical argument, that it is possible to be a connected critic and still be critical. Yet the book is an odd one because although, as Walzer points out in the introduction, the critics in question are not isolated figures but important public intellectuals,¹⁰¹² and as such fulfill the description of the connected critic, by no means all of them take their task to be that which Walzer says is the task of the social critic. Indeed, Walzer starts with Julien Benda, who, on Walzer's account, "provides a classic defense of the old idea of intellectual detachment and critical solitude."¹⁰¹³ Later on, Walzer writes of Michel Foucault that although one "can hardly read [him] and doubt that he is a social critic,"¹⁰¹⁴ his work is beset by the "catastrophic weakness" of failing either to "inhabit" a particular social setting or to "construct" a new one.¹⁰¹⁵ This was, it will be remembered, the criticism with which Walzer charged both Marxists and Sartre in chapter 2 of *Interpretation*. So, we have the oddity that Walzer says he is writing about the practice of social criticism and yet that his social critics frequently do not act or theorize as though they are social critics of the sort that he valorizes. How does *The Company of Critics* fulfill the task it sets itself of providing a "focused discussion" of the "philosophical statement" that was *Interpretation and Social Criticism*¹⁰¹⁶ if the discussion centers on figures who do not act in accord with the philosophical statement?

The answer is that Walzer did not claim that all social critics understand their task to be what he stipulated that it should be. At the start of chapter 2 of *Interpretation*, he acknowledges the frequency with which critics have, for example, been marginalized to the extent that their critical distance would have to be measured in something more than inches. His theory of social criticism is a critical theory; that is, it is not supposed to apologize for social critics but to enter into the conversation with them about how to undertake their enterprise. Each of the figures that he discusses in *Company* is a social critic, but they do not all live up to his account equally well. As a result, he evaluates them differently and is not afraid to offer stringent criticisms of such figures as Foucault in the course of the book.

Nonetheless, there are differences in tone among *Interpretation* and *Company*. One comes right at the very beginning. The first sentence of *Company* says that, "Social criticism must be as old as society itself."¹⁰¹⁷ Unless the reader had just put down *Interpretation* when they read those words, they would probably have forgotten that in the third chapter of the earlier book, Walzer argued that the biblical prophets invented the practice of social criticism. Presumably, the prophets did not invent society, so here we have a striking disjuncture between the two works. Which view is correct? Reading the second sentence of *Company* – "How can men and women ever have lived together without complaining about the circumstances of their common life?"¹⁰¹⁸ – we doubtless will be inclined to think that the later view is persuasive. As we read further, we may come to think that the distinction is because of the precision of the language. A few pages

into *Company*, Walzer starts referring to “modern” social criticism¹⁰¹⁹ and to “democratic”¹⁰²⁰ assumptions about how it should be practiced from the inside. When we remember the features of ancient Israel that were said to allow social criticism to flourish there as it had not in either Egypt or Assyria, notably the culture of prayer and argument and the relative lack of power of the priests, we will see that what Walzer really meant in the first sentence of *Company* was that “social complaint” is as old as society.¹⁰²¹

The inconsistencies among *Interpretation* and *Company*, however they are glossed, should not obscure the fact that the essential tale is the same. In *Company*, Walzer reiterates the following arguments, all of which were discussed above: that social critics need not be alienated from or hostile to the societies in which they live;¹⁰²² that the “natural language of criticism” is that of the “folk...[raised] to a new pitch of intensity and argumentative power;”¹⁰²³ that criticism is most powerful when it draws on this natural language and “gives voice to the common complaint of the people or elucidates the values that underlie those complaints;”¹⁰²⁴ that basing criticism on those values does not limit the “range and variety of criticism,” which is indeed limitless;¹⁰²⁵ that detachment is damaging rather than useful to the critical enterprise, because it can result in “the surrender of critical perspective”¹⁰²⁶ and loss of the energy of antagonism;¹⁰²⁷ that, on the other hand, a “moral tie” to victims of injustice can breed responsibility;¹⁰²⁸ and that critics should not seek to set themselves up as some sort of intellectual vanguard, which means that the contemporary “deprivation” of close relations between critics and their audience is a defeat for social criticism.¹⁰²⁹ The last of these points ties *Company* in with such articles in *Radical Principles* as “The Pastoral Retreat of the New Left” and “Notes for Whoever’s Left” and demonstrates its importance as a link between Walzer’s methodological and his political writings. Walzer concludes that the appropriate place for the critic is “close to but not engulfed by their company.”¹⁰³⁰

Where *Company* makes a new contribution to the study of Walzer’s thought is in its account of the 11 social critics Walzer chooses to study. These figures – ten men and one woman – are from across the 20th century, starting with Julien Benda’s account of the “treason” of the intellectuals in the late 1920s¹⁰³¹ and continuing until Afrikaner poet Breyten Breytenbach’s critique of apartheid in the 1980s,¹⁰³² which was still ongoing at the time *Company* was written. (As Simone de Beauvoir had died in 1986 and Foucault in 1984, Breytenbach was the only one of the social critics alive when *Company* was published in 1988.) In between, Walzer provides historical interpretations of Randolph Bourne’s critique of US involvement in World War I,¹⁰³³ of Martin Buber’s Zionism,¹⁰³⁴ of Antonio Gramsci and Ignazio Silone’s involvement in Italian communism,¹⁰³⁵ of George Orwell’s ambivalent relationship with the English middle classes,¹⁰³⁶ of Albert Camus’s writings on France’s involvement in Algeria,¹⁰³⁷ of de Beauvoir’s feminism,¹⁰³⁸ of Herbert Marcuse’s critique of the “one-dimensionality” of post-war American life,¹⁰³⁹ and of Foucault’s critique of the ubiquity of power relations.¹⁰⁴⁰ It may strike the reader that just as ten of the 11 figures are men, so ten of them are from either Europe or North America. However, as we shall see, the tragic heroes of Walzer’s book are those involved in groups struggling in less privileged parts of the world: in fascist Italy or war-torn Spain, in post-war Israel or Algeria, and in apartheid South Africa.

To call these accounts interpretations is not quite right, because Walzer writes to a purpose and constantly assesses his thinkers against the standard of the extent to which they managed to be critical of a sector of society with which they identified while maintaining the identity. Thus, for example, Walzer assesses de Beauvoir differently from the point of view of men and women. She “attacks the male world from the inside, exploiting its ‘universal’ values” and is, to that

extent a social critic of men.¹⁰⁴¹ Yet this is precisely why later feminists were critical of de Beauvoir, because it meant that she wrote of women “from the outside” or as an asocial critic. Where de Beauvoir assumed that “the experience of transcendence is or will be exactly the same for men and women,”¹⁰⁴² later feminists such as Iris Marion Young and point out that the roles already occupied by women could be part of the root to a different transcendence.¹⁰⁴³ The point is not to get into a debate about whether feminism should use a “different voice,” but to show how, for Walzer, de Beauvoir is not from the point of view of the bulk of women of her era a social critic because her writing does not identify with their lived experience.

As mentioned earlier, both Benda and Foucault come under excoriating criticism from Walzer for their failure to identify with a particular group of people. Likewise, Marcuse’s critique of American society was too distant from it to achieve victory “on the ground”.¹⁰⁴⁴ The (tragic) heroes of the book are those such as Camus and Breytenbach for whom group identification is an irreplaceable part of their personality – this is why Walzer’s social criticism is often described as communitarian – and yet the behavior of the group so fails to live up to its commitments that the social critic cannot continue to define themselves as part of the group. So, for Breytenbach, “connection has become desperate”¹⁰⁴⁵ to the extent that he was when the book was written in semi-permanent exile in Paris.¹⁰⁴⁶ Breytenbach and Camus shared the sentiment that, “I cannot act differently than I am.”¹⁰⁴⁷ Breytenbach would always be an Afrikaner, just as Camus was always a *pidé noir*. Yet because criticism “is a more intimate activity than the standard view allows,”¹⁰⁴⁸ it is precisely this identification that makes such people the perfect critics of their groups’ behavior in Algeria or in South Africa. Identification may make social critics refuse to criticize their people publicly,¹⁰⁴⁹ and it may be so strong as to reduce the critic to silence, something that never happens with “impersonal judgment,” but it also may make the critic feel that he “must speak.”¹⁰⁵⁰ Furthermore, it is the first duty of critical thinkers: “First comes the struggle against one’s own degradation and then, by extension, ‘that of others’”.¹⁰⁵¹ For these reasons, Walzer concludes that the message of the connected social critic such as Camus, Silone, Orwell or Breytenbach carries with it a resonance that disinterested philosophers cannot hope to achieve. As he puts it, “The detached and disinterested moralist drones on and on, and we don’t care. But the silence of the connected social critic is a grim sign – a sign of defeat, a sign of endings.”¹⁰⁵² Where the group with which the social critic is connected acts indefensibly, the critic may have to be silent, but this silence is one of the surest signs of malaise in political life.

The motto of *Company* might then be “Be Thyself.” Given the travails of 20th century politics, this means that there is more than a shade of “despair” in the book.¹⁰⁵³ However, *Company*, like most of Walzer’s books, has a hopeful message. Walzer concludes his account of Breytenbach by quoting the poet as saying that he has not “accepted his exile” or “substituted a more general and abstract commitment for the particular one that he can only barely sustain.” Rather, he “must force himself to maintain a dialogue with the inside.”¹⁰⁵⁴ This conclusion is reiterated at the end of Walzer’s own final chapter, when he discusses courage in social criticism. This is, according to Walzer, in essence to never give up the dialogue with one’s own people, to maintain connection with the people and yet also to maintain the insistence on that group living up to the standards that it formally sets for itself.¹⁰⁵⁵ What makes social criticism a more hopeful task than “disinterested moralism” is the fact that the critic upholds standards that he or she believes the target audience to espouse too, at least officially. Walzer emphasizes the point in his conclusion with one of his many extended citations from Shakespeare, in this case to the glass that Hamlet shows up to his mother.¹⁰⁵⁶ By showing her a mirror, Hamlet allows his mother to

see “simultaneously what she (really) is, and what she most deeply wishes to be.”¹⁰⁵⁷ Social critics do this too and it is their big advantage over disinterested philosophers. A disinterested philosopher cannot appeal to the audience’s conscience without first appealing to its intellect. The social critic need not persuade the audience that her logic is impeccable. He must simply point out that the audience shares the understanding of the world that he is explicating to it. There is a shared understanding of what it means to be an Afrikaner, or a pied noir, or a member of the English middle class, and this shared understanding is such that apartheid or imperialism or even inequality shocks the conscience of the perpetrator. That is all that is needed for social criticism to have hope of success.

Walzer’s account of how political theorists should undertake their task, which has comprised all of *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, “Notes on Self-Criticism,” and *The Company of Critics*,¹⁰⁵⁸ is often described as communitarian. There is a sense in which this is true, since it appeals to the values of a particular community. We will return to consideration of this point in section IV of this chapter. However, it is worth bearing in mind that the argument made about Walzer’s communitarianism in chapter 3 applies here too. Walzer’s social criticism draws heavily on the influence of his colleagues at *Dissent*. This is shown by the appeal to lived experience, which featured so prominently in the account of de Beauvoir, and in the claim that every set of shared understandings fosters the capacity for radical critique. For example, Afrikaner culture might to some appear a relatively unfertile ground for a critique of apartheid. However, because, as Walzer argued in chapter 2 of *Interpretation*, every ruling class seeks to present itself as a universal class, there are resources within that culture that can foster an anti-apartheid cause, as Breytenbach demonstrated. The heroes of Walzer’s books are those figures such as Amos, Camus, and Breytenbach who realize this point and who use the values of a particular community to promote equality both within and outside that community.

5. “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation”

In many ways, this article can be seen as reiterating the argument of “Philosophy and Democracy,” although on this occasion the application to political life is less extended and the critique of philosophy – or a mode of philosophy – more detailed. Walzer has his sites set on Plato in this paper and, in particular, on the fact that Plato’s dialogues are really “monologues interrupted by the affirmations of a one-man chorus.”¹⁰⁵⁹ What is wrong with the Platonic dialogue, and with much of western philosophy, is that it seeks to impose agreement on the conversation and to come to a final conclusion. However, what Walzer calls “real talk” differs from this “ideal speech” because it is “unstable and restless”¹⁰⁶⁰ and has no “firm conclusions” or “authoritative moments.”¹⁰⁶¹ In other words, Walzer again argues that philosophy is in thrall to what Hannah Arendt called “the tyranny of truth.” His critique suggests that real talk is preferable because it is more radical, open-ended and democratic.

Walzer points out that many of Plato’s dialogues contain little more than a quasi-lecture delivered by Socrates and an occasional, “Certainly” or “Of course” from someone such as Glaucon.¹⁰⁶² This makes the argument seem more forceful, Walzer says, because “the acquiescent interlocutor speaks not only for himself but for the reader.”¹⁰⁶³ The purpose of the interlocutor is not to call into question the Socratic argument but to affirm it. Were Plato to have written monologues, we would have known only that he felt his arguments persuasive. With Socrates and Glaucon present, the number in agreement is at least doubled and arguably tripled. However, this is an inaccurate picture of philosophical development because, although

agreements are possible, “they develop very slowly, over long periods of time; they are always rough and incomplete.”¹⁰⁶⁴ Plato’s dialogues are thus unrealistic. For an example of a philosophical dialogue that more nearly matches actual conversation, Walzer cites David Hume’s *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, because of its inconclusive endings. The readers of these dialogues “resemble men and women in an actual conversation who disagree the next day about who said what... It is obvious that no sure truths about natural religion have been delivered.”¹⁰⁶⁵ This is more realistic, in Walzer’s view, because truth cannot be got at by conversation. It is for that reason that contemporary philosophers are tempted by “hypothetical conversation” and are in search of a set of rules that will determine how that conversation might proceed.¹⁰⁶⁶

It should be obvious at this point that Walzer is discussing the same ground as he did in *Interpretation* when talking about the path of invention and its design procedure. Sure enough, John Rawls and Jurgen Habermas loom large in the subsequent sections of the article. What Walzer takes to be the crucial aspect of the designs that such philosophers come up with is that they involve “ideal speakers” or “an ideal set of speech acts.”¹⁰⁶⁷ In Rawls’s case, the interlocutors are denied knowledge of the particularities of their selves, while Habermas denies them access to media resources and Bruce Ackerman calls for “external restraint” in the mode of a policewoman called “Commander” who controls the conversation.¹⁰⁶⁸ This is grist to Walzer’s mill that this mode of philosopher tends towards authoritarianism, at least ideationally. Many arguments are simply ruled out of the conversation as if by fiat, which means that, “Agreement at the end is certain.”¹⁰⁶⁹ Acquiescence, the likely outcome of decision-making in real talk, is not enough in this ideal speech. For example, Rawls famously argued against a “modus vivendi,” preferring “stability for the right reasons.” Walzer suggests that this delegitimizes the sort of agreement that votes produce. Furthermore, he advances the claim that many of the constraints sought by ideal speech planners are either unnecessary or impossible. Participants in debate think of themselves as “rough equals,” so we do not have to stipulate that that is what they are.¹⁰⁷⁰ We cannot insist that they be bound by the better argument, because “most speakers quite honestly think that their own arguments are the better ones [even though] they might acknowledge that they are not making the better argument then and there.”¹⁰⁷¹ In the latter case, the interlocutor normally walks away, only to come up with a “brilliant afterthought” subsequently. (Perhaps the ending of Platonic dialogues such as the *Euthyphro* implies this).

The differences between ideal speech and actual speech would not be a problem for Walzer were it not that figures such as Ackerman and Habermas claim that we ought to talk to each other in the way they describe or that we in a democracy understand each other in accordance with their stipulations.¹⁰⁷² Walzer thus feels obliged to point out that agreement in liberal democracies is less likely than in other political regimes¹⁰⁷³ and that, in a democracy, rather than playing the same role all the time, citizens play “different roles on different occasions – not all roles together on a single occasion.”¹⁰⁷⁴ There is no final debate about the generalities of the just society, but different debates on different occasions about different particularities.

The final problem with ideal speech is that it fails to recognize the social particularities of the constraints that it builds into the conversation. Such constraints build common judgment into the procedure and Walzer would be the last person to deny the necessity of that. But shared understandings do not arise from a rational debate and are impossible “without authority, conflict, and coercion”. Despite this, they do have “binding force.”¹⁰⁷⁵ To demonstrate this, Walzer cites one of his favorite pieces of historical evidence, but one that I have for the most part ignored until now: namely, the idea that a career is a crucial part of the good human life and that

as a result careers should be open to talents. As he points out, “the idea of a ‘life plan’ is crucial to Rawls’s theory of justice. But that is not an idea that can be confirmed or disconfirmed in the original position.”¹⁰⁷⁶ For us, lives are indeed careers and however much we accept that they became so not through debate but social practices, our lives remain careers. Yet we cannot determine whether a life should be a career or not through an ideal speech situation. It either is one, as in our society, or is not one, as in medieval Europe, because of the set of shared understandings prevalent in the society at the time.¹⁰⁷⁷ Furthermore, the outcomes of the ideal speech situations such as Rawls’s are highly dependent on “pre-original” ideas such as life as a career.¹⁰⁷⁸

Walzer concludes that, “ideal speech cannot serve as a test of received ideas.”¹⁰⁷⁹ The elements of the design actually precede the speech and are worked out in real conversation. The same is true of “the processes (including the real talk) through which such ideas are generated.”¹⁰⁸⁰ In other words, there is no value-neutral way of developing the constraints to be used in an ideal speech situation. We just happen to develop a particular set of norms that philosophers feel moved to apply through ordinary democratic speech. In real speech, the outcomes cannot be predicted. That is what makes real speech inconclusive and that is why it is more radical than, and ultimately preferable to, ideal speech.¹⁰⁸¹

6. “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism”

For many students of Walzer, this will be the first article of his that they read, especially if they are introduced to him in the field of political theory rather than that of international relations. The article may confuse many, because it presents itself as an overview of a debate in which Walzer is most often taken to be a participant. Walzer does not present the case for the communitarian critique of liberalism but seeks to evaluate it, and comes to the conclusion that the “brief but recurrent”¹⁰⁸² nature of communitarian criticism will continue. It is, he says, “doomed...to eternal recurrence.”¹⁰⁸³ There had been much speculation on Walzer’s relationship with communitarianism. In 1990, he finally addressed the question directly, but his response was typically ambivalent.

Nonetheless, the article sheds important insight into Walzer’s approach to political theory. This is seen most obviously in the fact that Walzer handles the question predominantly in historical and sociological terms, with an analysis of what he calls the “Four Mobilities” of contemporary American life.¹⁰⁸⁴ To an extent that few members of the School for Ethical and Legal Philosophy would share, Walzer takes the communitarian critique to stand or fall largely on the accuracy of its description of American life. Furthermore, he puts into practice the approach to theoretical questions that he advocates generally and that we saw in great evidence in “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation.” Where most philosophers would expect a once-and-for-all answer as to which of liberalism and communitarianism was preferable, perhaps with caveats stating that each had its strong points, Walzer answers the question in time. Communitarian critiques of liberalism will never replace it but not will they ever go away. There will be no final stopping point on the liberal-communitarian debate but simply a series of temporary answers.

Indeed, as noted above, Walzer both begins and ends the article by noting the recurrent nature of communitarian critiques and comparing it to fashions. Like short skirts and pleated trousers, communitarianism is

transient but certain to return. It is a consistently intermittent feature of liberal politics and social organization. No liberal success will make it permanently unattractive...no communitarian critique, however penetrating, will ever be anything more than an inconstant feature of liberalism...For now, there is much to be said for a recurrent critique, whose protagonists hope only for small victories, partial incorporations, and when they are rebuffed or dismissed or coopted, fade away for a time only to return.¹⁰⁸⁵

In this sense, communitarianism seems to have a status similar to that of “movement politics” or social democracy, for Walzer had argued in both *Political Action* and “The Pastoral Retreat of the New Left” that a movement that aimed for small victories was something worth fighting for. There is a difference, however. As we will be reminded of in the discussion of *What It Means to be an American*, he said in “Civility and Civic Virtue in Contemporary America” that social democracy ought to sit alongside liberalism rather than replacing. Indeed, Walzer goes on to note in “The Communitarian Critique” that communitarianism “is usefully contrasted with social democracy, which has succeeded in establishing a permanent presence alongside of and sometimes conjoined with liberal politics.”¹⁰⁸⁶ Communitarian critiques are brief but recurrent; social democracy has a more permanent presence. But both can only win small victories because neither can replace liberalism altogether. I have argued throughout this thesis that Walzer is best understood as a social democrat, but that does not mean that he wishes to see it replace liberal politics altogether.¹⁰⁸⁷

Why must communitarian critiques be recurrent? Why can they not, like social democracy, sit permanently alongside liberal politics? The reason is, according to Walzer, that there are two powerful but contradictory communitarian arguments, one critical of liberal practice and the other of liberal theory. Walzer does indeed wish to replace these critiques with a weaker one that could be incorporated within liberal or social democratic politics, but is of course incapable of doing so.¹⁰⁸⁸

According to the first communitarian critique, liberalism has indeed led to a deracinated social form. The USA, like other western societies, is “taken to be the home of radically isolated individuals, rational egotists, and existential agents, men and women protected and divided by their inalienable rights.”¹⁰⁸⁹ If this view is correct, then liberal theory accurately reflects the practice of liberal states. The communitarian critique is, then, that liberal society is “fragmentation in practice,” whereas community is “the home of coherence, connection, and narrative capacity.”¹⁰⁹⁰ This view, first popularized by the young Marx and finding its most powerful recent exponent in the work of Alasdair MacIntyre,¹⁰⁹¹ sees people in the liberal state as fundamentally isolated and incohesive and the state as incoherent and characterless. We have no real choice, because the account of the self that could make those choices is lacking. Walzer seeks to question whether this is supposed to be an accurate description of women’s lives or only of men’s,¹⁰⁹² but goes on to argue that this critique has something to it, but that if it were descriptively accurate then liberalism might indeed be the only response to isolation. He asks, “If we really are a community of strangers, how can we do anything else but put justice first?”¹⁰⁹³

However, this critique is not accurate and its failings are shown by the second communitarian critique. According to this argument, liberalism’s description of contemporary American life is inaccurate. People are not isolated and unencumbered individuals and could not be. We are born into a set of groups that largely define us with the result that “the deep structure even of liberal society is in fact communitarian.”¹⁰⁹⁴ Here, critiques such as Robert Bellah and his coauthors on

Habits of the Heart argue that liberalism takes away our sense of bondedness and the problem with liberal politics is that it reflects that.¹⁰⁹⁵ As a result, citizens are more dependent than they need to be on the liberal state. For Walzer, this critique is also “partly right,” but if “the first critique depends on a vulgar Marxist theory of reflection, the second critique requires an equally vulgar idealism. Liberal theory now seems to have a power over and against real life that has been granted to few theories in human history.”¹⁰⁹⁶ If people are in reality connected to each other, how could a political theory have the power to make them feel disconnected?

It is to sort out what is correct in the communitarian critique(s) that Walzer turns to the discussion of the Four Mobilities, the purpose of which is to explore the ways in which American society does indeed make individuals more “dissociated” from each other than in other societies.¹⁰⁹⁷ The mobilities are geographic, social, marital and political.¹⁰⁹⁸ Americans move house and region more than any other society has ever done. They are more likely to move up or down the status hierarchy and to live lives radically different from that of their parents. They are more likely to divorce and remarry than has been anyone since the Roman aristocrats. Finally, they are less loyal to parties or movements and are more likely to be independent voters.¹⁰⁹⁹ In a liberal society, the rate of change is far greater than in a non-liberal one. Walzer goes as far as to argue that, “Liberalism is, most simply, the theoretical endorsement and justification of this movement.”¹¹⁰⁰

Of course, each of the types of mobility has a positive side. Walzer recognizes that by endorsing them, liberalism makes itself “genuinely popular.”¹¹⁰¹ We see the mobilities as each representing our acting out of our liberties. It is, however, noteworthy that the fourth mobility is one that Walzer had long argued against and his points here closely follow what he had to say in favor of caucuses as opposed to primaries in *Spheres*. In any case, the mobilities also have a downside. The liberal “popularity has an underside of sadness and discontent...and communitarianism is...the intermittent articulation of those feelings. It reflects a sense of loss, and the loss is real.”¹¹⁰² When we move house, we do not always do so because we wish to. We can move down the status hierarchy as well as up it. Divorce may lead to happier remarriage but it can be disruptive for children and increase the number of lonely adults. So, there is something to be said for the first communitarian critique. Liberal citizens are not completely unencumbered, but they are relatively isolated.

What of the second critique? Walzer points out that even with the effect of the Four Mobilities taken into account, the “ties of place, class or status, family, and even politics survive...to a remarkable extent.”¹¹⁰³ Parental voting patterns, to take one example, are still the best predictor of how we will vote. Even our disagreements are “mutually comprehensible.”¹¹⁰⁴ So, when MacIntyre bemoans philosophical debates such as that between utility and rights, this does not reflect social incoherence but philosophical flourishing. As Walzer pointed out in “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation,” although they always search for agreement, philosophers actually always disagree with each other. The same is true of the civil rights movements and the common values evoked by the rhetoric of Martin Luther King.¹¹⁰⁵ We live in a liberal tradition in which a set of common language relating to rights is “simply inescapable... This is the truth of the second critique.”¹¹⁰⁶ If liberalism is the cornerstone of the ties that bind us, how can it fail to help us understand our community?

Each critique is, then, partly right. Liberalism is the tradition of our community, which means that we are relatively isolated but also that we are creatures of a community. The reason that liberal society requires periodic communitarian critique is that liberalism “seems continually to undercut itself” by “disdaining” its own tradition.¹¹⁰⁷ In each generation, we try to gain greater

freedom from our cultural heritage. But by cutting such ties, we are in effect continually trying to destroy our own community because “there is no imaginable community that would not be alien to the eternally transgressive self. If the ties that bind us together do not *bind* us, there can be no such thing as community...communitarianism is antithetical to transgression.”¹¹⁰⁸ Because liberalism consistently seeks to break the ties with its own community, communitarian critique is recurrently necessary to reinforce those ties. What communitarianism does is seek to reinforce particular communal values.

For example, communitarian critique is necessary with regard to the liberal value of free association.¹¹⁰⁹ In liberal society, free-rider problems abound, and communitarianism seeks to minimize that danger.¹¹¹⁰ Associations in the liberal state are threatened by the Four Mobilities and it is “a critical question” whether “associative passions and energies” can survive them.¹¹¹¹ So, the burden of communitarian critique in this area is to suggest that the state must foster associations.¹¹¹² Given the liberal state’s tendency to drift towards neutrality, this means that a particular type of liberal state must be fostered: namely one that is, “at least over some part of the terrain of sovereignty, deliberately nonneutral.”¹¹¹³ It must sponsor activities that “seem most likely to provide shapes and purposes congenial to the shared values of a liberal society.”¹¹¹⁴ In *What It Means to be an American*, we shall see Walzer defending state neutrality in the area of ethnicity and he is clearly not entirely comfortable promoting “perfectionism” here. Nonetheless, he gives several examples of the sort of state behavior he has in mind, for example the Wagner Act in the 1930s, which fostered union activity.¹¹¹⁵ The liberal state could foster unions, or neighborhoods, or religious organizations. What characterizes each of these things is that they predate the liberal state.¹¹¹⁶ More importantly, each is a form of “cooperative coping”. It is for Walzer the hallmark of a good liberal or social democratic state that it enables this.¹¹¹⁷

So, the purport of the communitarian critique is that liberalism must be prepared to accept a state that is in some ways non-neutral. Walzer thus interprets the communitarian critique as being substantively very similar to the “revival of neoclassical republicanism.”¹¹¹⁸ Republicanism seeks to engage citizens in political life and is best suited to small communities with “radically undifferentiated” civil societies. Therefore, any growth in republicanism would require strengthening of local government so as to encourage “civic virtue” in many different local settings. In other words, the non-neutral state would empower cities and towns as well as unions and neighborhoods.¹¹¹⁹ This could not guarantee the demise of local communities because it is “a matter of principle that communities must always be at risk.” We could not argue against that principle without going against our own shared understandings.¹¹²⁰

To conclude, Walzer’s account of the communitarian critique is that its partial validity requires a non-neutral state that fosters “the intimations of community” in various local settings. He insists in closing the article that the make-up of the self is not the central issue in the liberal-communitarian debate.¹¹²¹ Neither theory must be committed to a strong view of the self. Liberalism and communitarianism are not distinguished by the nature of the self but by the connection of selves and how social relationships work. Indeed, “Contemporary liberals are not committed to a presocial self, but only to a self capable of reflecting critically on the values that have governed its socialization; and communitarian critics, who are doing exactly that, can hardly go on to claim that socialization is everything.”¹¹²² As we see in this quote, what vitiates Walzer’s account of the liberal-communitarian debate is his conviction that liberalism is the tradition that dominates American life. That is why communitarians can never seek to replace liberalism. Were they to do so, they would after all cease to support the tradition that

predominates in their community and would, to that extent, stop being communitarians. That is why communitarian critiques can do no more than perpetually recur.

7. “Nation and Universe”

“Nation and Universe” was another Tanner Lecture on Human Values, this time delivered by Walzer in 1990. It has attracted less attention than *Interpretation and Social Criticism* and is generally a less significant work. However, it is important in its reiteration of key themes in Walzer’s work, starting with the fact that he states at the outset that he does not try to be victorious but merely persuasive in his argument about universalism and particularism.¹¹²³ The reiteration includes such minor things as Walzer’s favorite quote from the book of Amos: “Have I not brought Israel out of the land of Egypt?”¹¹²⁴ It also includes the reiteration of the argument about life as a career that was discussed in “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation” and elsewhere.¹¹²⁵ It is displayed, more importantly, in his insistence on the pluralism of good forms of group organization, this time noted through a critique of Tolstoy’s claim that all happy families are alike.¹¹²⁶ Yet what is most important about “Nation and Universe” is not the fact that it reiterates important themes from Walzer’s thought but that it turns the concept of reiteration into the bulwark of its argument. For this reason, as we shall see, the lecture is a major step on the way towards the argument of *Thick and Thin*.

Walzer opens the lecture by introducing the notion that there are two types of universalism. He dubs the first, more familiar type, as “covering-law universalism”.¹¹²⁷ Much like many movements in the history of philosophy, covering-law universalism, familiar through the history of Christianity, takes the view that there is one correct path of historical development and that those nations that have not followed it are “chronicles of ignorance and meaningless strife.”¹¹²⁸ This view promotes a sense of confidence and pride in its adherents. There is a clear link between this type of view and the secular approach to history that Walzer considered in “Modernization” and that we discussed in reference to its appearance in *Radical Principles*. Modernization theorists such as Rostow and Almond can be straightforwardly identified as secular covering-law universalists. It is this type of universalism that Walzer frequently seeks to criticize.

Yet he is himself a universalist. To explain how he is one, Walzer revisits his discussion of the prophet Amos. This type of universalism is a characteristically Jewish doctrine. Walzer calls it “reiterative universalism.”¹¹²⁹ As we shall see, it is a much thinner type of universalism, which is what makes this lecture a stepping stone en route to the fully developed contrast between thick and thin. It could easily be argued that Walzer’s account of reiterative universalism is intended as a justification of the Jewish claim to be a chosen people; he would more likely deem it an explanation. Reiterative universalism is the view that,

Liberation is a particular experience, repeated for each oppressed people. At the same time, it is in every case a good experience, for God is the common liberator. Each people has *its own* liberation at the hands of a single God, the same God in every case, who presumably finds oppression universally hateful. . . What makes it different from covering-law universalism is its particularist focus and pluralizing tendency. We have no reason to think that the exodus of the Philistines or the Syrians is identical with the exodus of Israel, or that it culminates in a similar covenant, or even that the laws of the three people are or ought to be the same.¹¹³⁰

Walzer then ties this account to the argument he made in *Exodus and Revolution* about there being two versions of the exodus story. In the second version, the histories of different people do not converge. Although there is one God, there are many blessings. Walzer believes that this type of story leads to non-intervention, based on tolerance and mutual respect. As each nation has its own laws, so each has a different, although overlapping set of forbidden acts that are deemed evil.¹¹³¹

It is easy to see how this account might be secularized. Walzer's argument, in essence, is that a type of universalism, which he calls reiterative, merges easily with particularism of law. Just as he sort to establish a communitarian critique that could sit alongside liberalism, so he seeks a variant of universalism that is compatible with, and in fact requires, pluralist particularism. The universal law is that each nation should be allowed to iterate its covenant with God. In secular terms, we are good universalists when we allow each nation to establish its own particular set of laws. We recognize our common humanity when we see that we each have the "creative power...to do different things in different ways." Each of the values of individualism, such as freedom and autonomy, are universalist values with particularist implications.¹¹³² What is reiterated in reiterative universalism is the collective right to self-determination, not the substantive content of the law.¹¹³³ To draw an analogy with love, Walzer points out that every lover must love for herself. Universal love offered to a particular person would not be love as we understand it. Yet love is a universal good because each person may love in her own way.¹¹³⁴

Reiterative universalism allows for, in fact mandates, pluralism, but it is still a form of universalism.¹¹³⁵ This is because it imposes a (universal) moral injunction about the recognition of otherness.¹¹³⁶ Reiterative universalism is thus tied in to Walzer's later arguments about the politics of difference. On this occasion, Walzer attaches more attention to the fact that reiteration operates in similar ways in each nation even when it results in a different outcome. This is because, to repeat a theme from *Spheres* and from *Interpretation*, the moral world that each nation makes is not created at random but because of the experience of power.¹¹³⁷ To say that each nation must find its own way is not to say that it just does as it sees fit. There is a range of responses but it is also possible for nations to create the moral world "inadequately or dishonestly."¹¹³⁸ To reiterate *Interpretation*, Walzer adds that the outcomes of other nations can be criticized on the grounds of the "failure of practical outcomes to match conceptual ones: performances falling short of promises."¹¹³⁹ This is of course the primary task of the social critic. Walzer's most basic injunction is that we treat people in accord with their ideas about just treatment. Reiterative universalism does not respect "Reason," as covering-law universalism in its secular mode does, but "our reason and their reason."¹¹⁴⁰ In this sense it is in accord with the rule of reasons that Walzer sees as the hallmark of democratic debate.

Walzer concludes his discussion of the two types of universalism on this note. However, "Nation and Universe" as published is a collection of two Tanner Lectures. In the second one, "The National Question Revisited," Walzer seeks to put the distinction between the universalisms to practical work in a discussion of what to do if "the things we make (buildings, codes, countries) turn out to be ugly."¹¹⁴¹ Basing his argument on the claim that immorality simply is the denial of the right to reiteration,¹¹⁴² Walzer argues against even "benevolent" interventions such as those that Marx and Mill might have defended in India.¹¹⁴³ That is because any intervention is justified by the "morally dangerous belief that the victims have somehow lost their powers of agency...their capacity to shape their own lives."¹¹⁴⁴

Walzer criticizes this view on the grounds that what Machiavelli called “plebian nations” frequently do resist, as the Indians did in 1857.¹¹⁴⁵ It is problematic that when resisting, nations often develop distorted variations of nationalism that seek to suppress internal minorities or to claim superiority to them.¹¹⁴⁶ (This is a theme that Walzer takes up again in *What It Means to be an American*.) Thus, he has to call on the thin universalism of reiterative universalism again to advance the argument that the only ranking of cultures that is legitimate is that by which “nations committed to rank ordering rank low.”¹¹⁴⁷ The purpose of this is to protect Machiavelli’s plebian nations from those noble nations that seek to dominate them.¹¹⁴⁸ The idea that the nationalisms of each nation are constrained by the rights of other nations is one that we will take up again in our discussion of *What It Means*. Walzer defends that position here by arguing that nationalism should not be seen as “collective egoism” but as “collective individualism”.¹¹⁴⁹ Different nations may behave badly and be judged for it. However, where covering-law universals would judge bad behavior on the grounds of a nation’s domestic laws, for Walzer bad behavior relates to treatment of minorities and of other nations: in other words in external grounds. Moreover, even while judging, reiterative universalism “recognizes the value of what it admonishes.”¹¹⁵⁰

The importance of “Nation and Universe” is primarily in its deployment of the concept of reiteration. That enables us to see links between Walzer’s different research programs that would not otherwise be obvious. In “Nation and Universe,” the research on Jewish history is tied in with Walzer’s complex equality justification of pluralism, with his theory of non-intervention, and with his interpretive mode. If morality were made or invented, it might fall under one or other covering law. It is because it must be interpreted that moral principles are inescapably reiterative. Reiteration is also a clear expression of the importance to Walzer of lived experience. It is because morality is reiteratively made again and again that no covering law can apply. A moral world is something that we make, and making is of course a form of doing. Morality never simply is. It is always debated again and again in different settings. There are therefore countless possible iterations of it.

8. *What It Means to be an American*

This book is a collection of four articles written by Walzer over a period of almost 20 years prior to the book’s publication in 1992. Yet they are of a piece, each concerning what Walzer calls “the politics of difference in the United States.”¹¹⁵¹ In the thematic section of this chapter that immediately follows, I will talk about the book as being the first major part of Walzer’s research on civil society and American democracy. Walzer had become increasingly interested in the notion of civil society since the decline of the Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s, and several of the articles considered earlier, notably “Justice Here and Now,” “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments,” and, especially, “Socializing the Welfare State” touch on the topic. *What It Means to be an American* is simply the first time that essays on this topic were brought together in book form.

I said that the topic was aptly dubbed civil society and American democracy because that is the title of a collection of essays published in German in 1992 and cited above. In this respect, *What It Means* is in the same lineage as *Spheres* and, even more so, *Radical Principles*. Indeed, one of the four essays, “Civility and Civic Virtue in Contemporary America,” was published in *Radical Principles*, much as “A Day in the Life of a Socialist Citizen” reappears in *Radical Principles* having originally been published in *Obligations*. “Civility and Civic Virtue in Contemporary America” had originally been published in *Social Research* in 1974, and what we

should ask is why Walzer sought to reproduce the article for a third time.¹¹⁵² The essence of the argument of “Civility” is that Americans actually display greater civility – or “social discipline”¹¹⁵³ - than they did earlier in the century, but that civic virtue is incompatible with the liberal individualism and requires a “new politics” that must be “socialist and democratic” and “must not supersede but stand in constant tension with the liberalism of our society.”¹¹⁵⁴ Civic virtue requires greater participation in politics, but liberalism without socialist democracy discourages political participation by fostering private ambitions as citizens’ primary aims.

Now if dissatisfaction with liberal individualism was a concern of Walzer in 1974 and in 1980, prior to the election of Reagan to the White House, we can imagine how much more so it would have been in 1992 after 12 years of Republican rule and Reaganomics. I said earlier that Walzer was motivated to reiterate his defense of socialized medicine in “The Long-Term Perspective” by the very fact that it was so out of fashion when he wrote it. The same is true of the discussion of participatory politics in “Civility” and it is this that motivated Walzer to include the article in *What It Means to be an American*. Of course, in between 1974 and 1992 Walzer had had more and more involvement with the liberals of the School of Ethical and Legal Philosophy. Their liberalism is by no means as uncongenial to him as is that of Reagan. Nonetheless, the continuing influence of *Dissent* and the tradition of radical American democracy would have helped Walzer to maintain the belief that no type of liberalism is sufficient to foster an inclusive and activist politics.

The other three articles are all much more recent than “Civility”. However, one of them, “Pluralism: A Political Perspective,” was originally published in 1980 in the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*¹¹⁵⁵ and I have delayed consideration of it until now because of its similarity to the other articles in *What It Means*. The title chapter, “What Does It Mean to Be an ‘American’?” was first published in 1990 in *Social Research*, the same journal that had published “Civility” 16 years earlier.¹¹⁵⁶ These two articles, together with “Civility,” were first brought together in 1991 in an Italian volume edited by Nadia Urbinati that was the predecessor to *What It Means*, together with a different version of Walzer’s introduction.¹¹⁵⁷ For the American publication, Walzer added to the list of chapters, “Constitutional Rights and the Shape of Civil Society,” which had been published in a collected volume the year before.¹¹⁵⁸ The varied publication history should not obscure a certain unity in the track records of the articles. Two were published in the same journal, while the other two were both in volumes relating to the shape of American society.

However, without Walzer’s introduction, aptly titled “The Politics of Difference,” we might fail to see exactly why the articles were brought together. There he explains what he means by the politics of difference. In essence, Walzer is concerned with how the USA can flourish despite the “ethnic and religious differences” among its inhabitants.¹¹⁵⁹ (These articles do not consider what Walzer admits may become the “harder questions of class, gender and race.”)¹¹⁶⁰ The topic stands in a substantive way for the topic of internal pluralism raised in *Spheres*. Most European societies have been nation-states; the USA is a multi-national state. Likewise, most philosophers traditionally assumed homogeneous societies; Walzer insists on the inevitability and beneficence of heterogeneous ones. So, *What It Means* explores how internal pluralism works in practice and the problems that it has faced.

In “The Politics of Difference,” Walzer sets out a comparison of how difference might function in Central and Eastern Europe, where cultural pluralism is a new phenomenon, compared to the USA, where it is not. He calls this a comparison between “the new tribalism” and “multiculturalism.”¹¹⁶¹ Walzer’s method is to set out a hypothetical historical account of the

“moments” in the politics of difference. These are: “articulation, negotiation, and incorporation.”¹¹⁶² Articulation is when the politics of difference begins. A group of underprivileged people “insists on its value as a group and on the solidarity of its members and demands some form of public recognition.”¹¹⁶³ This will often be a response to attempts at absorption such as the American melting pot and “the more universalist programs of leftist parties aiming at the transcendence of all parochial identities.”¹¹⁶⁴ The group doing the articulating aims to reject that transcendence and affirm its own identity, so articulation “gives voice to difference...[and] can no longer be denied...or transcended.”¹¹⁶⁵

As a result of the difference being visible, negotiation must follow. Frequently, formerly repressed groups seek to restrict the rights of the newly visible group and this means that, “the articulation of difference, however liberating, is also very dangerous.”¹¹⁶⁶ That is why negotiation is necessary. Negotiation works only if something akin to what Walzer referred to in “Nation and Universe” as “reiteration” can come into effect: “each group must come to acknowledge that its limits are set by the legitimacy of the others.”¹¹⁶⁷ Negotiation seeks to ensure either “peaceful co-existence” or “a pluralist civil society,” dividing civil society into fragments surrounded by “dotted lines” fit to enable “boundary crossings.”¹¹⁶⁸ The repetition of language drawn from *Spheres* is noteworthy.

Following negotiation, the different groups must be brought together in a new and more just way, because each needs economic support from the state and to co-operate with the others. The result is “religious and cultural pluralism, regional autonomy, group representation, affirmative action, and new forms of citizenship.”¹¹⁶⁹ These will of course be different in every country because of the variations in the democratic process. The only thing that we can be sure of is that “there is no transcendence of cultural, religious, and national particularity.”¹¹⁷⁰ However, so long as we wish to uphold democracy, we must support the politics of difference except in so far as groups seek to diminish the rights of other groups.¹¹⁷¹

The overarching structure that will accommodate the politics of difference cannot be determined. However, Walzer predicts that two forms are likely, first the “territorial dispersion” of immigrant groups common to immigrant societies such as the USA, Canada, Brazil, and New Zealand,¹¹⁷² secondly incorporation into a nation-state as a minority.¹¹⁷³ Each mode has its own problems. It may be that the lack of political participation that Walzer decries in the USA is the result of its “not very robust citizenship,” which leads him to the argument that citizenship must be stronger in states with strong ethnic identity.¹¹⁷⁴ Here Walzer points out what I mentioned above in discussing “Civility,” namely that “our singular citizenship and our pluralized culture” are both “threatened by a radicalized ideology of individualism and an anti-politics of privatization.”¹¹⁷⁵ In former nation-states, political engagement is less likely to become a problem, but such states must work harder to ensure that “ethnic and religious minorities are protected and the rights of citizenship are fully available to their members.”¹¹⁷⁶ As this is particularly difficult in former nation-states, Walzer stipulates that individuals must have a “more direct” relationship with the state and that “group mediations will be reduced in importance.”¹¹⁷⁷ This reduces the threat of privatization. Yet despite the differences between these two modes, Walzer concludes by insisting that they are simply different ways of incorporating different groups and that the “moral principle common to both is that difference ought to be accommodated” even while the “precise form of the accommodation has to be worked out politically.”¹¹⁷⁸ The politics of difference is, in short, here to stay and can ensure the flourishing of democracy.¹¹⁷⁹

“The Politics of Difference” concludes with a “checklist” of how Americans might manage the politics of difference while asserting “the twinned American values of a singular citizenship and a radically pluralist civil society.”¹¹⁸⁰ He also argues that the point of *What It Means* is to make that assertion. In other words, the book aims to defend those twin American values. In the checklist, he argues that Americans must not restrict immigration, because the USA is an immigrant society and so immigration must be celebrated.¹¹⁸¹ He adds that public schools must be strengthened and must teach both the history of immigration and the history and practice of democracy.¹¹⁸² Further items include: strengthening civil society and “secondary” associations; maintaining state neutrality by representing all particular identities within it; creating a more participatory politics; and resisting autocratic and aristocratic politics as they inevitably arise in a multicultural society.¹¹⁸³

I take “The Politics of Difference” to be the key chapter of *What It Means* because it is a summary statement of the other four. However, I will say something briefly about the remaining three articles. “What Does It Mean to Be an ‘American?’” and “Pluralism” make broadly similar arguments, both of which are reflected in “The Politics of Difference.” In “What Does It Mean?” Walzer argues, for reasons similar to those listed in the discussion of “The Politics of Difference,” that the key aspect of American citizenship is being happy with the fact that the US “has no singular national destiny.”¹¹⁸⁴ In other words, to be an American is to recognize the value of ethnic pluralism. In “Pluralism,” Walzer notes that, contrary to the Marxist argument about class, ethnic and national group identity remains the key group commitment of people throughout the world.¹¹⁸⁵ He goes on to argue that “ethnic assertiveness”¹¹⁸⁶ has served the important functions of providing a defense against “cultural naturalization,”¹¹⁸⁷ of celebrating particular identities,¹¹⁸⁸ and of building and sustaining ethnic communities by gaining control of resources and providing welfare services.¹¹⁸⁹ He concludes that, “ethnic pluralism is entirely compatible with the existence of a unified republic,”¹¹⁹⁰ before sounding a cautionary note. This is that although American experience has shown that ethnic pluralism works well, it has yet to prove the same thing for racial communities. Citizens of ethnic minorities have proven loyal to the US state because it “protects and fosters private communal life...[so long as] that is seen to be equitably done.” However, it remains to be seen whether that equity, which has worked in the case of ethnic minorities, can be extended to racial ones. That is because, “Racism is the great barrier to a fully developed pluralism and as long as it exists American Indians and blacks, and perhaps Mexican-Americans as well, will be tempted by (and torn between) the anti-pluralist alternatives of corporate division and state-sponsored unification.”¹¹⁹¹ The state can do more to make opportunities available but it cannot ensure that minority members use them. The US government, because it is not the government of a nation-state, cannot “foster a particular identity,” which is why pluralism remains “an experiment.”¹¹⁹²

The argument that the US government cannot foster a cultural identity is a noteworthy one, precisely because it is commonly said to be one of the major communitarian critiques of liberalism that the latter insists on state-neutrality. If Walzer were a communitarian, then, we would expect him to advocate a non-neutral state. Indeed, in his discussion of nation-states, Walzer does just that. However, the US is a different kettle of fish because it is a multi-ethnic state and it would be anti-democratic for the government to foster any particular identity. This is one of the clearest points in the discussion of Walzer’s work in which we see that his so-called communitarianism is really an application and combination of social democratic principles culled from the tradition of American radical democracy and liberal ones he picked up from the School of Ethical and Legal Philosophy.¹¹⁹³ It is true that “Pluralism” was written in 1980, but it

was republished in 1992, so if Walzer had changed his views on government neutrality in the 1980s, he would presumably have revised the article to reflect that. Furthermore, Walzer had been dubbed a communitarian in 1977 following the publication of *Just and Unjust Wars* and if *Spheres* is a communitarian work, then he ought to have been deemed communitarian in 1974 after he published “In Defense of Equality.”

The final chapter of *What It Means* is “Constitutional Rights”. In this article, Walzer argues that the US constitution is really two texts, one “a design for state and government”¹¹⁹⁴ and the other “focused on civil society.”¹¹⁹⁵ The first tries to create a strong central government and to restrain it through a system of checks and balances. The second wishes to strengthen the checks and balances by external restraints on the government in the form of a bill of rights and judicial activism.¹¹⁹⁶ Walzer argues that the nature of American society makes the bill necessary: “We have a Bill of Rights because we have a diverse and pluralistic society.”¹¹⁹⁷ The Bill reflects the aspirations of the members of American society at the time of its foundation, and that was a Protestant society, As a result, the Bill is primarily a set of “entitlements to nonconformity and dissidence.”¹¹⁹⁸ This foundation to the Bill has led to a form of religious conservatism in American civil society. As a result, we have “something like the civil society of the eighteenth century even in the face of industrial revolution, mass immigration, urbanization, cold war.”¹¹⁹⁹

Walzer, as noted in his frequent citations of Burke, and especially in the discussion of “The Moral Standing of States,” is by no means afraid of the tag of “conservative,” so he does not simply conclude that American constitutional conservatism is a bad thing. However, there is a tension because “the Constitution is also a radical document” guided by “the subversive logic of rights.”¹²⁰⁰ The US Constitution has both conserved and transformed American civil society. The transformation has taken four major forms: first, “collective action to alter the existing patterns of ownership;”¹²⁰¹ secondly, “individual action to alter one’s own relationships without waiting for a more general social transformation;”¹²⁰² thirdly, “governmental action for the sake of social reform or transformation;”¹²⁰³ fourthly, “governmental action for the sake of individual freedom.”¹²⁰⁴ Walzer contends that the second and fourth of these have been much more successful than the first and the third because of “the strongly individualist bias that the second text introduces into the Constitution as a whole.”¹²⁰⁵ The Bill of Rights has enabled individual transformation, while failing to do so for general social change. This is because, to cite just one example, the Bill has to reckon with both “differences of opinion” and “differences of power”. Although the Bill can be used to grant minority groups “constitutional entitlements,” it is less easily put to the task of providing equality of resources, and without this social change is stymied.¹²⁰⁶

Walzer argues that this means that some form of constraint on dissidence and privacy might be necessary.¹²⁰⁷ The obvious question is what form that might take, given that he is not willing to give up any of the rights in the Bill.¹²⁰⁸ Yet it is worth considering why he would not do so. For, as Walzer notes, “one of the chief reasons for valuing those rights...is that they facilitate the first and third forms, the collective and cooperative forms, of social action... They make possible... ‘the politics of difference’.”¹²⁰⁹ Furthermore, the authors of the Bill did not anticipate that it would have such “privatizing effects.”¹²¹⁰ So although restrictions on rights cannot be countenanced, Walzer continues to search for constraints on privacy, turning to the option of enabling collective action. He dismisses the Supreme Court as a possible source of aid but suggests that the Constitution might have more effect.¹²¹¹ This leads him to the conclusion that while the Supreme Court defends rights, Congress might strengthen American cohesiveness, in

particular in the “secondary associations.”¹²¹² The state could come to the aid of civil society, although it must act “subject to its internal checks and balances.”¹²¹³

In other words, “Constitutional Rights” makes, in updated language, much the same argument as “Civility” had done 17 years earlier, in that it advocates a more activist politics with stronger secondary associations in civil society. The link between these two articles is almost as strong as that between “What Does It Mean?” and “Pluralism, which makes the two halves of *What It Means* strangely symmetrical. It is also worthy of note, in concluding our consideration of the book that the argument of “Constitutional Rights” is easily seen as the evidence of Walzer’s communitarianism that “Pluralism” is not. For in “Constitutional Rights,” Walzer advocates using the political apparatus of the state for collective ends. There is no question of liberal neutrality here, despite the caveat about subjecting Congress to checks and balances. However, the two arguments are different in tone and this evinces reasons as to why Walzer puts seemingly contradictory arguments into the same book. In “Pluralism,” Walzer is talking about the cultural status of different ethnic groups; in “Constitutional Rights” state interventionism to combat Protestantism is intended to promote equality. Walzer’s position in “Pluralism” is essentially a liberal one, while in “Constitutional Rights” he adopts a social democratic one. Given that, in “Civility,” he had argued that social democratic politics should sit alongside liberalism, it seems unsurprising that he deems that a consistent set of choices.

III: Themes

In this section, I consider Walzer’s thought in the late 1980s and early 1990s more thematically. I start with the theme of the ethics of war, which Walzer discussed in a number of shorter articles at the time. I then return to themes related to the complex equality research program: namely, to Walzer’s methodology and its implications for his view of the role of political theory and of the political theorist; to civil society in the American context and its relationship to Walzer’s theorizing of citizenship; finally, to what this implies with regard to the meaning of complex equality in the American context. This will enable us to turn in section IV of the chapter to consideration of Walzer’s relationship with communitarianism. In that section, I will account for the historical development of Walzer’s thought in the late 1980s and argue that although the traditions continued to influence him, he had by this stage in his career formulated his own research agenda.

1. Ethics of War

Given Walzer’s involvement with *Dissent* and his interest in world affairs, it was inevitable that he would focus on the ethics of war in the early 1990s. The end of the Cold War and American involvement in the Gulf War of 1991 brought his attention firmly back to this topic, just as the former also influenced him to consider the topic of civil society carefully. In 1992, Walzer published a second edition of *Just and Unjust Wars*, which remains largely unchanged except for a new introduction evaluating the morality of the Gulf War.¹²¹⁴ He also wrote about the war in the *New Republic*¹²¹⁵ prior to its outbreak, in each case arguing that the defense of Kuwait was a classic example of a just cause,¹²¹⁶ but that the war must be limited by the requirements of just war theory such as not seeking the overthrow of Saddam Hussein and respecting non-combatant immunity.¹²¹⁷ Furthermore, in each piece Walzer provides a critique of the idea that war must be fought only as a last resort.¹²¹⁸ His argument is that there is no such

thing as a last resort, because states can always try to find another means of avoiding war and that if Kuwait had succeeded in defending itself for longer, the idea that war fought in its defense might be a last resort would not have arisen.

Walzer had earlier reiterated the demand that just war theory still be taken seriously in an era of weapons of mass destruction in another published lecture, "Emergency Ethics." This lecture was given as the Joseph A. Reich, Sr. Distinguished Lecture on War, Morality and the Military Profession, further evidence of the prestige of Walzer at this stage of his career.¹²¹⁹ In the lecture, Walzer reviews the argument about the supreme emergency that he had made in *Just and Unjust Wars*, and insists on its validity despite the fact that, as he had also argued in "Political Action," in an emergency we over-ride and do not suspend moral principles that we must violate.¹²²⁰ Walzer reiterates the claim that the emergency occurs because of a tension in our morality between the demands of utility and the importance of rights. This leads to the conclusion that, "A morally strong leader is someone who understands why it is wrong to kill the innocent and refuses to do so again and again...until the heavens are about to fall."¹²²¹ In such a situation, we have a genuine emergency and then political leaders must override certain rights, but only when the following conditions all apply: it must be in the face of great immorality, when success is near and yet the emergency response is the only possible one.¹²²² Nazism is a doctrine for which emergency responses are especially necessary because its aims are unlike those of "conventional conquerors"; thus, an "immoral response" may be required.¹²²³ We will return to the topic of "Emergency Ethics" in section IV of this chapter because in the lecture Walzer an interesting sideline on his attitude to communitarianism, but that is not directly about the ethics of war.

Walzer's other writing on the ethics of war appeared in 1988, when he published "Terrorism: A Critique of Excuses," in which he argues that nobody tries to defend the practice precisely because it is an attack upon the innocent, but instead some people try to make excuses for it such as the claim that terrorists have no other options.¹²²⁴ What makes this article important for the student of Walzer is that it reiterates the importance of non-combatant immunity in which the possibility of being a non-combatant is often denied. A central terrorist claim is that, "All politics is (really) terrorism" and that, in practice, the moral distinction between soldiers and non-combatants is minimal at best.¹²²⁵ By insisting on the moral significance of non-combatants, Walzer demonstrates the seriousness with which he holds that position and the wide applicability of just war theory. Another noteworthy feature of "Terrorism," is that one of Walzer's critiques of terrorism repeats the critique discussed in relation to the Gulf War about the impossibility of reaching "lastness" and the consequent non-existence of a last resort.¹²²⁶ Despite the critique, Walzer also offers an opinion on the right way to respond to terrorism, insisting that retaliation must only be against terrorists and not against their sympathizers and that where terrorists point to a genuine case of oppression, that oppression must be combated so as to undermine the rationale for terror and because opposition to oppression is a just cause.¹²²⁷

So, what Walzer had to say about the ethics of war in the late 1980s and early 1990s was not new to the student of him. This is perhaps unsurprising, given that the mature statement of his views had been given as early as 1977. Walzer remained of the opinion that wars in a just cause must be fought but that such wars must be limited to restoration of the status quo ante and must be fought within strict limits except in the case of the supreme emergency. What he did in these writings was to demonstrate his commitment to the importance of just war theory and its continued applicability in the post-Cold War world. Walzer continued to think and write about the ethics of war throughout his career, and we shall continue to come across his development of

the theme in the rest of the thesis. However, little of fundamental importance shall change, which is why I have dedicated relatively little space to the arguments he makes in this chapter.

Two other pieces of writing on war should be mentioned in passing. First, in “The Idea of Holy War in Ancient Israel,” Walzer demonstrates again that his approach to history is somewhat more flexible than that of contemporary historicists when he argues that the notion of holy war “ought to worry political theorists and theologians who find [a Deuteronomic conception of] community attractive.”¹²²⁸ For Walzer, it is possible to draw implications for our account of community now from the writings of ancient Israel. The second piece is “Moral Minimalism,” which is a first stab at the opening chapter of *Thick and Thin*, and which is important because it connects Walzer’s writing on the just war with his complex equality research project and other work. I shall have more to say about “Moral Minimalism” at the close of this chapter, when considering its development of the theme of “reiteration” first found in *Nation and Universe*.

2. Methodology

In a sense, this is the topic of both *Interpretation* and *Company*, which I already discussed exhaustively. It is a topic that I already alluded to in chapter 3 of the thesis, because in *Spheres* Walzer had already noted that he drew upon different disciplines than do philosophers such as Rawls. The question of what Walzer thinks as the appropriate task of the political theorist has loomed large for the last several chapters, as has its cousin, namely the question of what authority, if any, the arguments of political theorists and philosophers should have in a democratic community. The former is one of the themes of *Spheres* that Walzer mentions but does not fully develop or explore, while the latter is the subject of “Philosophy and Democracy” and, to a lesser extent of “Liberalism and the Art of Separation,” with its conclusion about the “unavoidable risks” of democracy. Those works were all discussed in chapter 3, while methodology was already a topic of importance in chapter 2’s discussion of the moral argument with historical illustrations that is *Just and Unjust Wars*. Yet at the time, methodology was a side topic. Walzer was interested in it and had interesting things to say about it, but it was secondary to substantive concerns such as the distribution of resources or the ethics of war. By the late 1980s, Walzer was dedicating himself to the question of how political theorists should argue and what response they should hope for from their audience.

Here I do not intend to repeat Walzer’s position on social criticism. Rather, I will give a brief account of its antecedents – of what it was that influenced Walzer to adopt the stance that interpretation was the best path for political and moral theorists to adopt – and of its place in his theory as a whole. As I have said, Walzer seems principally to have been influenced by three major intellectual traditions in the early years of his career. From the historicized idealism of his time at graduate school at Harvard and from his involvement with *Dissent* and the *New Republic* – with a set of comrades dedicated to something that I have called radical democracy – Walzer would have encountered an approach to the study of politics somewhat different to the more abstract approach of the School for Ethical and Legal Philosophy. His insistence that social criticism is preferable to abstract moralism would have been taken for granted in both the first two traditions, one of which encouraged graduate students to immerse themselves in history and the second of which was immersed from the outset in the problems and aspirations of the American near left. That someone who spent much of his time writing about, for example, the anti-Vietnam War movement should think that it is better to be a situated critic is unsurprising.

Someone who fits the bill of what Walzer calls the abstract moralist might be extremely concerned with the ethics of war in general and might have a passing interest in Vietnam as an example of a war in which ethical concerns seemed absent, but she be less likely to decide to write a book about the general interest because of a passionate involvement in the particular case. Walzer would probably insist that such a person would have insufficient reason to care about Vietnam to base a book-length project on it, let alone to campaign against it for many years. John Rawls or Robert Nozick would have been unlikely to enlist in the Spanish Civil War so as to fight Franco, although Walzer would not question that both of them deplored Fascism. Likewise, George Orwell would have been no more likely than Walzer to write *A Theory of Justice* or *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. In other words, our political commitments – most of which are prior to any sustained study of political theory – influence our ideas about how we should study theory. So, Walzer's stance on social criticism bears the hallmarks of the *Dissent* writer. After all, what are writers for journals such as *Dissent* doing if not engaging in social criticism?

Both historicized idealism and American radical democracy would have influenced Walzer to argue in favor of social criticism and the path of interpretation, although as the preceding paragraph probably makes clear, I suspect that the latter was a more powerful motivating force. With regard to the claim developed in chapter 2 of *Interpretation*,² and explored throughout *Company*, that social critics can be radical despite only having inches of critical distance and not yards or miles, American radical democracy seems to be the overwhelming influence. *Dissent's* very name gives away the general stance that it adopts with regard to mainstream American political events. The *New Republic* similarly wears its intellectual heart on its masthead. Acting as writer and editor for both publications, Walzer doubtless wanted to believe that it was possible to be immersed in American political life, to be an active member of the community, and yet to be a radical critic of that community. I do not want to imply that Walzer's argument was wishful thinking. Rather, my point is that this particular tradition gave Walzer a practical example of a community within a community that fulfilled his stipulations. The community was made up of critics who were both connected and radical. Therefore, the claim that connected radical criticism was impossible would have seemed utterly implausible to him.

With regard to the third tradition – namely that of political philosophy influenced by the analytic mode and which Walzer experienced through his involvement in the School for Ethical and Legal Philosophy – its influence in this area seems to be mostly negative. Walzer takes the members of the School to use the paths of invention and of discovery, as shown by the fact that he cites Thomas Nagel as a discoverer and John Rawls as an inventor. Yet Walzer wishes to reject both paths and to claim that neither invention nor discovery is either necessary or sufficient. We already inhabit a moral world, so we have no need to invent or discover one. Furthermore, even were we to invent or discover a moral world, we would then have to interpret it, so we could not escape the path of interpretation in any case. So, it seems to be the case that the School was with regard to method mostly a foil. However, anyone who reads Walzer's more theoretical writings in the late 1980s and then compares them to early works such as *Obligations* cannot fail to notice the influence of the School. Indeed, the very fact that Walzer felt himself required to make a philosophical statement of his account of social criticism (and, moreover, to develop that account prior to writing the political version of it that is *Company*) is itself an oblique nod to the respect Walzer felt for many members of the School and the tradition it represented. As he himself noted, the charge that social critics could not really be critical is a serious one.¹²²⁹

I have mentioned that there is really a fourth tradition that influenced Walzer, namely the Jewish one. We have seen Walzer's interest in Jewish history in recent chapters in works such as *Exodus and Revolution*, "Nation and Universe," and "The Idea of Holy War in Ancient Israel." It is also, of course, the subject of essay 3 of *Interpretation*. This is not coincidental. Substantively, of course, the occasion of it is the argument that the biblical prophets invented social criticism as a social practice. It would be a mistake to think that this is the only way in which Walzer's Judaism influences his argument about social criticism. The argument is, its entirety, steeped in the mores of Talmudic debate, which comes out nicely in the account of the story about dispute between Rabbi Joshua and Rabbi Eliezer. The Talmud simply is a written account of the rabbinic debate about to interpret the bible,¹²³⁰ as such it valorizes the difficulties and importance of interpretation like few other texts. Walzer's Jewish upbringing was already influencing his views about the inescapability of interpretation long before he started work as a political theorist.

It remains to consider the place of Walzer's methodology in his political theory as a whole. I will say more about this in section IV of this chapter, when we consider the nature of Walzer's relationship with communitarianism. For now, I want simply to point out that method is one of the major ways in which Walzer appears to be communitarian. Some might indeed say that there is no other way to classify someone who insists that political theorists should – indeed, can – do nothing other than interpret the values of their community and that each community develops its own moral world. However, as I pointed out above, Walzer takes his vision to be social democratic. Each community is taken to develop its own resources for immanent radical critique. It is because every ruling class must present itself as a universal class and can, therefore, be exposed on the count of hypocrisy that social critics can be radical. In the case of method, as in that of complex equality, Walzer's seeming communitarianism comes as he tries to apply egalitarian principles in a manner different from that of the School. He is at once situated and egalitarian. This does not mean that he is not a communitarian, but it serves to point out the vagueness of the reference and the care that must be taken when applying it to him.

3. Civil society and American democracy

I noted above that Walzer's writings on civil society were prompted by the decline of the Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe. In an article written in *The Economist* in 1993, a year after the pieces discussed in this chapter, he notes that civil society is becoming one of the two new bulwarks of political theory in the aftermath of the momentous year 1989, which he compares to 1848 for its historical significance.¹²³¹ (The other bulwark is the growth in importance of transnational institutions). For Walzer, the civil society notion is explicitly tied to the nationalist movements of Central and Eastern Europe,¹²³² linking it to what he sometimes calls "the new tribalism."¹²³³ As Walzer notes, even a "highly restricted version of civil society" helped dissidence to flourish in the Soviet bloc, and one of the central tasks of the new states is to rebuild it.¹²³⁴ We have seen that civil society is something that Walzer also valorizes in the American concept. For example, using the strengths of civil society was one of the ways in which distribution could be socialized without state activism growing too much.¹²³⁵ What, though, is civil society and why is it an important aspect of American democracy?

To answer the first question, the clearest definition of civil society that Walzer gives in this period is probably the one at the start of "The Concept of Civil Society." There Walzer says that it is "the space of uncoerced human association and also the set of relational networks – formed for the sake of family, faith, interest, and ideology – that fill this space... unions, churches,

political parties and movements, cooperatives, neighborhoods, schools of thought, societies for promoting or preventing this and that.”¹²³⁶ So, it was civil society that Walzer invoked when he argued that certain aspects of welfare provision should be handled on a local basis by religious groups in *Spheres* and in articles such as “Justice Here and Now” and “The Long-Term Perspective”. Earlier on, it was to civil society that Walzer allocated the responsibility for assigning children to a school when he defended the “neighborhood principle” over the alternatives in *Radical Principles*. Walzer had been appealing to what he now calls civil society long before 1986 but it has loomed large in this chapter because of political developments.

We can get further purchase on what Walzer has in mind when he talks about civil society and, more importantly, on why it is to him such an appealing part of an improved American society, by revisiting the argument of “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments.” Published in 1986, this is one of the first pieces in what was to become the civil society argument. We should note in passing that civil society continued to be a major theme in Walzer’s thought after 1992 and that, as a result, we will hear much more about it in chapter 5. Indeed, in 1995 Walzer edited a book entitled *Toward a Global Civil Society* and, in the same year, he published a paper discussing “The Civil Society Argument” that, structurally, plays much the same role in that debate as “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism” plays in the liberal-communitarian debate.

In “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments,” Walzer offered a critique of the view of society that divided it into public and private sectors on the grounds that the twofold distinction was insufficiently subtle in its distinguishing power. There were really four such sectors: the family, the state, the market, and the social sector. In that article, Walzer defines the fourth sector as comprising, “whatever is left in civil society once we have subtracted family, market and state... its characteristic mode is cooperation.”¹²³⁷ He goes on to argue that cooperation is preferable to the modes of market and state, which are calculation and coercion, respectively. I want to suggest that in later years Walzer might have rewritten that section to state that the social sector more or less is civil society. If we accept this view, it becomes obvious why civil society is such an important part of Walzer’s democratic socialism. It enables him to advance what he sees as an egalitarian platform, and hence to avoid the inequalities of the market, without falling back too much on the coerciveness of the state. The writers of the Scottish Enlightenment were the first to invoke civil society as a central part of social life,¹²³⁸ thus, it is less likely to frighten off certain parts of Walzer’s prospective audience than is state-based planning. Not just this: Walzer himself has frequently defended the marketplace so long as it is kept within its proper sphere.¹²³⁹ Walzer does not want to dismiss the state altogether. A central part of the “welfare society” is left to the state, which must “superintend and subsidize the work of citizens and volunteers.”¹²⁴⁰ However, civil society can take much of the burden of the welfare society off state hands.

An additional benefit of this process would be that more people would be involved in the process of redistribution and, ultimately, in political life itself. Remember that, for Walzer, one of the benefits of “socializing the welfare state” would be that more people would play the part of distributor of resources and not just of recipient.¹²⁴¹ Furthermore, as we shall see in the section that immediately follows, for Walzer the lack of political participation is one of the major problems with American life and one of the shortcomings of liberal theory. (This was, as we saw, one of the themes of “Civility and Civic Virtue in Contemporary America”).

The first two reasons why civil society is important in American democracy, and not just in the emerging democracies of Eastern Europe, are, then, that civil society reduces the amount of

state coercion without increasing inequality, and that its usage can increase political participation and give people goals other than the merely private. The third reason is perhaps the central theme of *What It Means to be an American*. It is that the USA is a multi-ethnic state rather than a nation-state and, as a result, requires a relatively weak state, because the threat of privatization is greater in multi-ethnic states.¹²⁴² According to Walzer, politics acquires a greater role in everyday life in nation-states because the national connection makes people feel more involved. Thus, civil society is actually *more* important in American democracy than it is in Eastern Europe. In Eastern European nation-states, most citizens feel a greater involvement in political life than they do in the multi-ethnic USA. Walzer concludes that because, to a great extent, “American citizens acquire political competence within secondary and often parochial associations,” civil society “is **for us** the ground of democratic politics.”¹²⁴³ Political involvement in the USA is less important to ordinary citizens than it is in Europe. Even if social democracy were to take the place alongside liberalism that Walzer wishes it to have, that would remain the case, albeit to a lesser extent. There is therefore no getting away from the role of civil society. For Walzer, it must be one of the cornerstones of American democracy.

It is worth noting that this position seems likely to be more congenial to the liberalism of most members of the Society for Ethical and Legal Philosophy than does Walzer’s methodology. Even egalitarian forms of liberalism are relatively suspicious of the coercive power of the state. However, I believe that Walzer’s attachment to civil society was in origin another outgrowth of his involvement with American radical democracy and *Dissent*. It demonstrates an interest in the minutiae of everyday American political life at the local level that is not common in the philosophizing of the School and more common among political activists and movement politicians. Hence in “The Pastoral Retreat of the New Left,” Walzer argued that the movement had not disappeared but focused on small, local victories for the time being. Moreover, the plurality of distributive outcomes that local provision ensures is something that runs against the grain of the universalism of much analytic philosophy and the liberal principles of key members of the School. It might even be deemed communitarian, in so far as it grants a major role to local communities in the determination of the distribution of resources.

4. Citizenship

Perhaps the most significant article written by Walzer in the period between 1986 and 1992 that I have yet to mention is that entitled “Citizenship” in the famous edited volume *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change*, which was published in 1989.¹²⁴⁴ This article is worth touching on briefly, especially because of the close relationship between it and those works that discuss civil society that were discussed just above. For Walzer, one of the problems of contemporary democratic citizenship is that it “does not seem to encourage high levels of involvement or devotion.”¹²⁴⁵ For this reason, theorists of citizenship often invoke the conceptions of it held by ancient Greeks and Romans. The article thus considers the origins of the term citizenship and of the duties of a citizen.¹²⁴⁶ Importantly, he concludes that only in early modern history was there a “failure to establish political life as the ‘real life’ of ordinary men and women.”¹²⁴⁷ Of course, Walzer accepts, ancient accounts of citizens such as those who rule and are ruled in turn (i.e. the account of Aristotle) required a “minimal range of social differentiation”¹²⁴⁸ and a small “scale of political organization.”¹²⁴⁹ He does not wish to argue in favor of a return to ancient republics, but he does insist on the importance of a more activist

politics. This is because our security must be secured against political authorities, which requires political activism.¹²⁵⁰

Walzer's conception of the citizen is, then, not of a rights-bearing agent, but of a political actor. Even when recognizing that it cannot be the "primary identity" or "consuming passion" of contemporary men and women and that the differentiation of our societies will always lead to "the primacy of the private realm,"¹²⁵¹ he hopes for a greater role for citizenship. The relationship of this argument to what Walzer had to say about civil society is unclear. In the article he points out that, for Rousseau and the Jacobins, "civil society was a threat to the republic, for it drew its members away from politics... It followed that citizenship and virtue required either the repression of civil society or the reduction of its scope."¹²⁵² By valorizing civil society, Walzer may not be seeking to get people involved in political life. However, he clearly does wish people to be involved in social life. For Walzer, the dichotomy is not a simple politics-civil society one, such as he presents it being for Rousseau. Social life includes the market as well, and it is the market that dominates our attention in contemporary life. By turning our eyes away from the market and towards civil society, Walzer thus intends to draw people a little closer to public life. In the civil society that he valorizes, people's goals are not private but social.

Perhaps a more important distinction between Walzer and Rousseau is that, for Walzer, politics is not subsumed by the central state. Recall that, in "The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism," he took the stance that the merit of the communitarian critique could largely be seen in its revival of neoclassical republicanism. In an American society improved by the adoption of aspect of the communitarian program, local government would have a larger role. The non-neutral state would empower cities, towns, and boroughs. This would have the effect of making something closer to ancient citizenship at least vaguely possible in local politics. Local government is not strictly speaking part of civil society, but it is also not part of the state as traditionally understood. By arguing for power to be devolved to it, so as to increase political activism, Walzer seeks to draw out the merits of both civil society and republican citizenship and to enable them to play a greater role in American life.

5. Complex Equality in the American context

Walzer delineates the requirements of distributive justice in the society in which he lives most fully in "Justice Here and Now". To repeat, those are: a shared infrastructure, communal provision, equality of opportunity, and strong democracy. Taken together, distributive justice requires what Walzer calls political justice. The reason politics is central is that citizens are "participants in a process... of collective interpretation... that process has its beginning in an account of the meaning of citizenship... [which] in a democratic setting entails equality. But... [not] in all the spheres of social life."¹²⁵³ This account of the importance of politics relates the argument to Walzer's position in many other works. Distributive justice in the USA is a process of interpretation, which presumably means that it requires social critics. The first thing to be interpreted is citizenship. Although there will be equality, that will not apply in each of the spheres of social life considered separately. This implies that the equality achieved will be complex equality. Citizens will be equal across the spheres if not necessarily within them. So, the account of distributive justice in the USA given in "Justice Here and Now" is an account of how complex equality will work in the USA.

Given that, we can see that there is another reason why in that article Walzer emphasizes the importance of political justice within an account of distributive justice. It is that what most makes for equality is what in “Nation and Universe” he took to calling “reiteration.” Earlier, he had referred to the importance of appealing to a set of shared understandings. What reiteration adds to the story is a reflection of how such sets are created. As Walzer puts it in *Interpretation*, we all live in a moral world, which is why we do not have to create one by invention or discovery. Now we see that we live in a moral world because we are constantly creating and recreating one by means of reiteration. It is this process that sets the terms for the debate about distributive justice, both within the USA and elsewhere. Walzer advances a position within the debate, as social critics everywhere do, but that position is not intended to be and cannot be definitive. There are no final answers. Rather, there are temporary answers along the road, as determined by shifting political majorities. So, just as the right of reiteration mandates what I called external pluralism – pluralism between communities – so it mandates pluralism over time within any one community. It is not for any temporary majority to determine once and for all what the community must do in the future. No more is it for a philosopher to authorize a particular set of distributive arrangements. Philosophers must become social critics and seek to persuade. They cannot be abstract moralists and impose the tyranny of their particular truth.

How complex equality would work in the USA is one of the minor themes of Walzer’s thought in the late 1980s. He does not focus on it in detail apart from in “Justice Here and Now,” but a plethora of articles focus on the parts, for example “The Long-Term Perspective” on medical care. Furthermore, as we have seen, from consideration of the other writings, including the methodological arguments of *Interpretation*, we can draw certain implications about how complex equality would operate in the USA. In particular, as I have said, although Walzer feels confident to say something about American-style distributive justice, his account is sketchy, tentative and inconclusive. Complex equality is something that we must all make and remake all the time. Ideally made, it would result in division between the spheres and a high degree of material equality because of such features as communal provision and a social infrastructure. Whether we adopt such a system is, however, not for Walzer to decide.

IV: Historical Development

I want now to say something about how Walzer’s thought developed during the late 1980s. My argument will be in two parts. First, I want to suggest that for all the influence of the various traditions that we have discussed on Walzer, it no longer makes sense to think of him as operating within any of them or even as synthesizing the three. That was the task of his earlier work. The work of synthesis operated also as the creation of Walzer’s own research agenda. With the final parts put in place by the writing of the methodological pieces, the research agenda was completed and several related research programs set up. These research programs – the major one relating to the study of complex equality, the minor ones concerning the ethics of war and Jewish history – operated alongside each other and as part of Walzer’s overarching research agenda. It is because each of these research programs was in place that Walzer then turned to how they related to each other in such works as “Moral Minimalism” and *Thick and Thin*. The second part of the argument refers back to the debate about whether Walzer is a communitarian or not. I will argue once more that his seeming communitarianism arises from the attempt to sort through dilemmas that arose when he tried to reconcile his commitments to socialism and to democracy, or to set out an egalitarian position using the tools of American radical democracy

rather than of analytic philosophy. In the end, as I have said, whether Walzer's mature position is taken to be communitarian depends on the exact specification of what is usually an under-defined term.

We saw earlier that Walzer's methodological writings show the hallmark of radical democracy. Yet the relative abstraction of the earlier parts of *Interpretation* shows the influence of the School for Ethical and Legal Philosophy as well. Walzer takes certain things from each tradition and rejects others, just as in his analysis of the liberal-communitarian debate he adopts certain themes from each side. This makes him hard to classify for many commentators on the debate, but only because the commentators operate with just the two categories in mind. Really, Walzer is a writer from a third, but related, category, namely democratic socialism. The same thing applies to the question of whether he operates within the tradition of radical democracy or of analytic philosophy. If he is a radical democrat, why does he focus on three abstractly conceived "paths" in moral philosophy? If he is an analytic philosopher, why does he continually argue that political theorists must do no more than interpret a set of pre-existing values? The answer is that he is neither a radical democrat nor an analytic philosopher. He has been influenced by both traditions and has drawn up his own research agenda taking points from both traditions to draw up what might become a new tradition (depending, I suppose, on how many of his students operate from within his framework).

The methodological writings of *Interpretation* and of *Company* are the final places in the development of the research agenda because they explain the tools that the agenda uses. I noted at the start of the chapter that none of Walzer's works in the late 1980s has the same scope of earlier works such as *Spheres, Just and Unjust Wars* and, arguably, *Radical Principles*. There are two related ways of explaining why this is so now that we have considered the works. The first is to say that *Interpretation* and *Company* ought really to be understood together. Walzer relies primarily on examples to develop his positions; hence, the theoretical statement of his methodology was bound to be shorter without the examples. *Company* does not differ from *Just and Unjust Wars* in scope but in being almost entirely example-based, as its theoretical argument is for the most part included in another book. The second is to say that Walzer had made the two major theoretical contributions of which he felt capable by 1983 and that from then on he was devoted to expanding and clarifying his positions on them. *Just and Unjust Wars* discusses political theory in an international context, *Spheres of Justice* in a domestic one, so the political world was almost covered. Which of the two arguments we accept depends in large part on how important we regard methodology. Some will see it as a third major contribution, others as a clarification of the major contributions that he had developed elsewhere.

A similar debate could be had about the status of the argument about moral minimalism in the article by that name and in *Thick and Thin*. We will come to a fuller discussion of this theme in the next chapter, but as "Moral Minimalism" was written in 1992, I will say a little about it here. In that article, Walzer notes that when watching protestors in Prague in 1989 he was perfectly capable of understanding what they meant when carrying signs saying "Truth" or "Justice," as was everyone else.¹²⁵⁴ Despite the difference in culture, Walzer and everyone else knew what it meant to march for truth or justice. There is, then, a moral universalism. However, that universalism is "thin" or "minimal" because any fully fleshed out account of the terms truth and justice would not be shared. "Moral terms have minimal and maximal meanings," the minimal one may be universal but the maximal one is not.¹²⁵⁵ It is possible to criticize other societies, but when doing so we will inevitably quickly depart from using the minimal meaning of moral terms.¹²⁵⁶ Minimalism is not, Walzer says, a foundational project, but one that makes

encounters between cultures possible.¹²⁵⁷ These are the bare bones of the argument and I will say much more about it later, but we can see that one of the purposes that it serves is to explain the relationship between Walzer's different research programs. In this sense, it has the same task as "Nation and Universe," which explores the relationship between universalism and particularism. As I have noted, Walzer's just war theory is in certain respects a universalist project; it is ultimately a human rights theory. His complex equality argument is also universalist in that it insists on the universal right of reiteration, but it is more obviously particularistic, because of its pluralism. The task of the argument about minimal and maximal morality is to explore the tensions between the two research agendas. That could be seen as a methodological task. It certainly explores the foundations of Walzer's argument. Whether that is seen as a major contribution or a clarification of previous contributions depends on the importance of foundationalism in the eyes of the reader of Walzer.

So, by the time period we are now considering, Walzer had the substantive framework of his own position and explored the methodological foundations of that position. His position is influenced by radical democracy, by analytic philosophy, and to a lesser extent by historicized idealism and by Judaism, but it is importantly a position of his own. The major planks of his position are: a thin moral universalism such that certain rights such as that to life or to "justice" are shared across cultures and each culture has the right to develop its own particular morality; a thick moral particularism resting on the right of reiteration; the ubiquity of moral lives in every culture and of the capacity for immanent radical critique in each culture; and the desirability of political theorists approaching their task from within the moral life of a particular culture, so as to ensure connectedness and criticism that is in accord with the shared values that the culture in question judges itself by.

Is that position a communitarian one? If, as Walzer claims in "The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism", the central distinguishing feature of a communitarian is that she believes that the self is not capable of questioning the values that have governed its socialization, it patently is not a communitarian position. Social criticism would clearly not be possible if social critics were not capable of calling into question the dominant values of their society. What social critics do is draw a composite picture of what they take to be their society's "real" values. That picture is not just given to them. The version of Hamlet's mirror that they hold up is one that they have made out of several similar mirrors. A social critic might do something like the following: advance the claim that market capitalism is not really in accord with the values of western society because, although it upholds the value of freedom of choice, it produces an impoverished form of equality. Indeed, even the choice left available is only in the barest sense of the term free, because of the different bargaining power of the parties to the agreement. This is, indeed, an example that Walzer uses. We should note what the social critic is doing. She is arguing that the values used to defend a particular position in society do not, when we consider their meaning in society as a whole, mean what the defenders of that position take them to mean. This is an argument that could not be made if the social critic were not capable of questioning her socialization, for freedom and equality in the market context may well frequently be taken to mean what the capitalist means by them. However, freedom and equality operate according to different usages in different aspects of our society. The social critic draws out the underlying meaning, but this requires creative interpretation.

However, if a communitarian is someone who holds that the values of a particular community cannot be shown to be flawed using the values of another community, even that of the philosophical community of truth, then there is a limited sense in which Walzer is a

communitarian. He repeatedly upholds the view that justice requires respecting shared values and treating people in accordance with their own view of how they ought to be treated. The argument about minimal morality shows that on occasion a community's values can be criticized from without, but any careful reader of *The Company of Critics* will have noticed how often Walzer weighs in with the view that the critique of the abstract moralist is many times less powerful than is that of the connected critic. Walzer might be deemed a maximalist communitarian but a minimalist liberal or universalist. These terms are a bit unclear, so it might be better to call him a thick communitarian and a thin liberal.

So, whether Walzer is a communitarian or not depends on what is meant by that term, which cannot be straightforwardly settled. This is hardly surprising because it is not a term that he chooses to apply to himself. Rather, Walzer sees himself as a socialist democrat. He wants democratic socialism to sit alongside liberalism, and so he is in many respects a liberal too, except that he dislikes the political passivity that he sees liberalism as encouraging. Even more importantly, he dislikes liberalism's treatment of equality, which he sees as overly abstract. For Walzer, egalitarian forms of liberalism fail to reach to the lived experience of equality and as a result are frequently more egalitarian in theory than in practice. (This is the argument of *Politics and Passion*, but it is also implicit in *Spheres*, in "Justice Here and Now," and in "Civility and Civic Virtue in Contemporary America", among other pieces). As I said in chapter 3, Walzer's communitarianism arises from an attempt to work out his position on the topics of liberalism, socialism, and democracy. He seems communitarian because he adopts an approach to equality drawn from the tradition of radical democracy – in other words, a situated approach based on lived experience - and because he privileges democratic procedure over substantive outcomes. Valorizing community is part of valorizing real life over philosophical work. In the same vein, Walzer defends real speech over idealized speech. Partly because much analytic philosophy is so abstract, this defense of real life seems communitarian. Communitarian is taken to be anything that references developments made outside the seminar room. I do not wish to deny the validity of calling Walzer a communitarian, merely to point out that we would get a better take on his position if we used his own labels and applied several of them at once.

V: Conclusion

In many ways, *Spheres of Justice* set the agenda for much of Walzer's work in the decade that followed it and beyond. *Interpretation and Social Criticism* explores the methodological approach advocated in *Spheres*, and *The Company of Critics* is a practical application of that methodology. In *Thick and Thin*, Walzer is still grappling with the question of the relativity of justice. Even in *Politics and Passion*, the search for a "more egalitarian liberalism" owes at least something to Walzer's move in *Spheres* towards seeking to reconcile liberal and social democratic theory.

So, the late 1980s was for Walzer a period of consolidation. He doesn't make the grand theoretical departures of the late 1970s and early 1980s but explores the implications of those that he already made. This is one of the major reasons why his works from the late 1980s have not had the impact of *Spheres of Justice* or of *Just and Unjust Wars*, but that does not make them unimportant or uninteresting. For the scholar of his work, they are of the utmost importance.

We turn in the next chapter to the period between 1993 and 2000, in which Walzer developed further his approach to minimal morality, continued to explore the concept of civil society, and became embroiled in debate over the argument of *Spheres of Justice*.

Chapter 5: Cultural Encounters and Moral Judgments, 1993-2000

I: Introduction

In 1994, at the age of 59, Walzer published *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad*, the work that offers his clearest explanation of how the complex equality and just war research programs are related to each other. In that book, Walzer argues that there exists a universal or near-universal morality that is minimalist in scope. This is the “thin” morality referred to in the title. According to Walzer, moral terms are in a minimal sense understood by peoples from around the world and upheld by almost all. With regard to justice, for example, there is a “common, garden variety” usage that everyone understands. Justice in this sense means “an end to arbitrary arrests, equal and impartial law enforcement, the abolition of the privileges and prerogatives of the party elite.”¹²⁵⁸ Justice understood in this minimal way is a concept of universal scope and applicability.

However, these minimalist meanings always sit alongside – or “are embedded in” – a “thick” account of morality that is culturally specific.¹²⁵⁹ Moral understandings are always fleshed out in some sort of maximalist account that people from other cultures do not understand. So, while the “idea of justice” appears in every human society, and while a simple understanding of the term is easily translatable across cultures, the idea always has a thicker understanding specific to a particular place.¹²⁶⁰ We can all agree with the prophet Isaiah that it is unjust to “grind the faces of the poor,” but we may disagree about what would count as treating the poor unjustly, or what would count as grinding their faces.¹²⁶¹ The idea and basic sense of justice is universal; the specific details are culturally particular. That is why there is a thick and a thin morality.

Thick and Thin is of the utmost importance to understanding Walzer because thick and thin morality explains why he bases his just war theory on human rights but eschews the notion of rights in theorizing about distributive justice. Many of the concepts dealt with in war are those that can be understood by relying simply on the common, garden-variety meaning of a particular moral term. That the My Lai massacre¹²⁶² violated the rights of its victims was comprehensible to people the world over: all cultures have norms against mass, indiscriminate murder. Yet given that, according to Walzer, we can distribute goods justly only if we know what the goods in question mean to the people involved, distributive justice is not susceptible to analysis grounded in minimal morality. Only in a maximalist account can we understand, say, the importance of healthcare in a particular society and only if we understand that can we know whether universal provision is required.¹²⁶³ *Thick and Thin* explains how the two substantive strands of Walzer’s thought that we have been grappling with are compatible with each other. It also deepens our understanding of Walzer’s methodological writings, by giving us further insight into the practice of social criticism.¹²⁶⁴ In important ways, *Thick and Thin* is the culmination of Walzer’s writing about the methods appropriate to political theory and the last of his major works.

After writing *Thick and Thin*, Walzer turned away from the just war research project for most of the rest of the decade, except for occasional short pieces on topical issues in *Dissent*.¹²⁶⁵ Much of his work for the remainder of the decade explored the nature of a multicultural society and how best to accommodate difference. Walzer’s writings on this topic develop the theme of *What It Means to be an American*. In a set of Castle Lectures given at Yale in 1997, and later published as *On Toleration*, Walzer takes the question of toleration to be about how different types of regime (multinational empires, consociations, nation-states, and immigrant societies)

have accommodated ethnic difference, and not about tolerance of eccentric individuals.¹²⁶⁶ In a *Dissent* article from 1993, he focuses on four types of exclusion, three of which relate to culture: namely, race, ethnicity, and religion. (The other one is class).¹²⁶⁷ During the 1990s, he developed the notion of “meat and potatoes multiculturalism” so as to argue that ethnic accommodation works best when different groups are empowered to command respect through being given the resources to develop organized institutional networks.¹²⁶⁸ This argument draws on Walzer’s early suggestion that secondary organizations in civil society should provide welfare services alongside central state provision, and thus ties in his conceptions of civil society and of multiculturalism.¹²⁶⁹

This chapter focuses on Walzer’s writings about maximal and minimal morality and multiculturalism, which are related by the theme of cultural difference and its role in moral life. Along the way, we encounter other themes such as civil society, which loomed large in Walzer’s theory following the collapse of the USSR and was also discussed in chapter 4, education and its role in the formation of a tolerant society and body of democratic citizens, and religion. This was to become especially important at the end of the decade, with the 2000 publication of the first volume of *The Jewish Political Tradition*, which focused on authority.¹²⁷⁰

As in previous chapters, I start by outlining the arguments of the major texts, then turn to group those arguments into thematic consideration, and conclude with an account of the overall development of Walzer’s thought in the period in question and a summary of the argument of the chapter. As this chapter takes the study of Walzer’s work up to 2000, the year of his 65th birthday, the final chapter covers all his subsequent works and brings us to the present day.

II: Texts

1. “Exclusion, Injustice, and the Democratic State”

This article, first published in 1993, is one of only two of Walzer’s *Dissent* pieces included in the 2007 collection of his essays, *Thinking Politically*.¹²⁷¹ As such, it provides an important point of linkage between Walzer’s political commentary and his political theory. The article concerns the feasibility of complex equality and anticipates part of Walzer’s response to critics of *Spheres of Justice* in *Pluralism, Justice, and Equality* (1995). It does this by taking up the question of whether democratic inclusion of excluded groups in political and economic decision-making would lead to some type of equality or mean that the same groups of people lose out in all spheres of social life, becoming “disenfranchised, powerless, unemployed, and marginalized members.”¹²⁷² Critics of Walzer’s project had often raised this fear, which implies that complex equality is impossible. Rather than separating the spheres leading to different people succeeding in different endeavors, it would lead to “radical exclusion.”¹²⁷³

Walzer recognizes the threat posed to his theory by the possibility of people failing in sphere after sphere, for in his account it’s not clear that such people have been treated unjustly. They might simply be unfortunates who suffer “undeserved pain” and not victims of exclusion.¹²⁷⁴ However, he offers two responses to the problem. The first is to suggest that it is some senses chimerical: it may appear that people are losing out again and again, but in reality they are being excluded by the increasingly subtle convertibility of dominant goods such as money that continue to elude democratic control.¹²⁷⁵ Thus, we are not yet in a position to know whether separation of the spheres would lead to “complex inequality.” Fears that it would do and that equality is a “cruel hoax,” such as that expressed by Michael Young in his *Rise of the*

Meritocracy,¹²⁷⁶ are not based on sociological analysis of how we now live. We still live in a society in which “the excluded mostly come in groups whose members share common experiences and, often enough, a family (racial, ethnic, gender) resemblance.”¹²⁷⁷ Thus, as mentioned above, this article touches on the concerns with the politics of difference that loomed large in much of Walzer’s thought in the 1990s.

Walzer’s second response modifies the theory advanced in *Spheres*. He makes the claim that “the state must play a larger role in advancing the cause of complex equality than I envisaged for it...ten years ago.”¹²⁷⁸ Most of the “victims” of exclusion in multiple spheres have been insufficiently served in the spheres of welfare and education, and this is the cause of their failures in the market, politics, and other spheres.¹²⁷⁹ So, the state must do more than prevent boundary crossings (which Walzer here states was the role he had envisaged for it in *Spheres*).¹²⁸⁰ It must also help in redrawing the boundaries between spheres, because of the degree of spherical violation that the existence of an excluded group implies.¹²⁸¹ State agents must therefore be involved in “interpreting the relevant meanings and in designing appropriate distributive arrangements...the state cannot disregard what is going on in the different spheres.”¹²⁸² Of course, this raises the possibility of the sphere of politics dominating social life, and so Walzer concludes by anticipating *Thick and Thin* and stipulating that state officials can defend only “minimal morality” unless the breakdown in spherical boundaries is enough to prompt massive protest on the part of citizens.¹²⁸³

2. “Objectivity and Social Meaning”

The other major piece of work that Walzer produced in 1993 was a response to those critics of his who had charged that he “disdained” objectivity.¹²⁸⁴ It is in many ways a sequel to his earlier works that criticized the strand within analytic philosophy that sought to make philosophical argument the dominant mode of discourse within political theory. Probably for that reason, in *Thinking Politically*, it is included immediately after “Philosophy and Democracy” and “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation” and before the articles that deal with substantive political concerns.¹²⁸⁵

Walzer wants to defend a certain notion of objectivity, but he cannot but recognize that the common conception of that term is at odds with his insistence that the meaning of many objects is the product of social construction. For, what objectivity is commonly taken to mean is that “the object imposes itself. The subject is passive and indiscriminating.”¹²⁸⁶ Walzer rejects that notion of objectivity on the grounds that human beings are “active subjects” whose faculties influence their perceptions and who come to the examination of objects with pre-existing ideas and interests.¹²⁸⁷ Thus, “social meanings” are “constructions of objects by sets of subjects,” a process that is continually ongoing and subject to revision.¹²⁸⁸ Although the object may set limits to the ways in which it can be constructed, its meaning is always open to myriad different modes of construction. For example, a table could be used as “a desk, a workbench, a butcher’s block, or an altar”, although not as “an intercontinental ballistics missile.”¹²⁸⁹ Our shared understandings determine meanings and perceptions or shape the various meanings that different people hold.

Objectivity survives, then, within the context of a set of shared understandings. Within any community denials of the meaning of an object are likely to reflect either “some failure of normal understanding” or “an effort to reverse the process” through which the object has been constructed.¹²⁹⁰ Members of a community can object to the meaning that has been ascribed to the

object but cannot easily deny that such a meaning has been ascribed. Thus, for the members of that community, although not for other people, the object imposes some sort of meaning on the observing subjects.

There is no “universal model for social construction,” and so the “range of difference among actual outcomes is very wide.”¹²⁹¹ Moreover, we cannot imagine social construction taking place in “ideal conditions” that would generate “a model outcome,” because an attempt to do so must be circular, as we can know what the model outcome would be only if we know what conditions are ideal.¹²⁹² Given that we do not know what the model outcome would be, it seems that it is impossible to offer a critique of actual outcomes.

As in his previous work, Walzer insists that this appears to be a problem only because of a misunderstanding about the nature of criticism. Social critics get purchase by pointing out the differences between the ideas that we wish to live by and the instances in which the idea is imperfectly realized.¹²⁹³ Such criticism can, Walzer says, take place only if there are “objective values, where objectivity is a true report on social meaning.”¹²⁹⁴ In other words, criticism is not stymied by the social construction of meaning; it depends on it.

The question then arises as to whether it is possible for a society to construct its values badly. Walzer considers a society in which all women are socially constructed as objects of exchange. Walzer says that such societies cannot be just if women have been excluded from the constructive work.¹²⁹⁵ Unlike tables, human subjects must be involved in their social construction, or the meaning cannot take hold (even if the resistance is inarticulate or hidden). If oppressed women do not conceive of themselves as objects of exchange, there is no objective social construction of them as such. The controversial aspect of Walzer’s argument arises when he considers what holds if women do take themselves to be objects of exchange and not merely because of brainwashing or lack of power.¹²⁹⁶ Then, he says, the social construction is subject to a necessary but just contradiction. Such a woman is,

constituted by a contradiction in so far as her subordinate status depends (morally) on her own agreement or acquiescence and is therefore inconsistent with subordination itself... She can never become just an object of exchange; the proof of this is that if she ever repudiates her object status, she is immediately and wholly a subject... But so long as she confirms them... they retain their force; she is partly an object...

So long as the woman-who-is-an-object-of-exchange confirms her object status, the contradiction in her being is an objective contradiction... I see no morally acceptable way of denying the woman-who-is-an-object-of-exchange her own reasons and her own place in a valued way of life.

Just as democratic majorities must have the right to override philosophical principles, so must members of excluded groups have the right to sanction their exclusion.

3. *Thick and Thin*

I already explained the central argument of *Thick and Thin*, and want here to discuss its structure and the relation between it and Walzer’s subsequent work.

Chapter one, “Moral Minimalism,” focuses on the idea that there any moral system contains a thin, minimal morality that is more or less universally applicable, and a thicker, maximal

morality that depends on culturally specific meanings and practices.¹²⁹⁷ In chapter two, “Distributive Justice As A Maximalist Morality,” Walzer argues that the debate about distributive justice of which his own theory of complex equality is a part, must be culturally specific.¹²⁹⁸ According to Walzer, “any full account of how social goods ought to be distributed will display the features of moral maximalism: it will be idiomatic in its language [and] particularist in its cultural reference.”¹²⁹⁹ Chapter three, “Maximalism and the Social Critic,” revisits the ground of *Interpretation and Social Criticism* and *The Company of Critics* and explains why social criticism works within a particular maximal morality.¹³⁰⁰ Chapter four, “Justice and Tribalism,” explains why international political theory is dominated by the moral minimalist principle of self-determination, which mandates tolerance of the various maximalist moralities of “the tribe.”¹³⁰¹ Finally, chapter five, “The Divided Self,” is an expanded version of “Notes on Self-Criticism,” which I discussed in the previous chapter, and explains why we need the thick moralities of differentiated societies if we are to achieve self-understanding.¹³⁰² So, Walzer starts *Thick and Thin* by explaining his main argument. He then goes on in the next three chapters to explain how this argument mandates a difference of emphasis between his two research projects. Distributive justice can be understood only in culturally specific form, while international politics is based on a universal principle, albeit one (self-determination) that mandates cultural specificity and autonomy.

“Moral minimalism” is Walzer’s engagement with the argument about relativism and universalism, a follow up of sorts to “Nation and Universe.”¹³⁰³ It is important to understand how the thick morality that every culture contains relates to the thin morality that is reflected universally. Moral reflection on minimalist ideas such as justice will, according to Walzer, “range over a mostly familiar terrain,” but what is said will be integrally linked to that society’s views on other matters. Only certain aspects of it will be familiar to those from other cultures.¹³⁰⁴ Any onlooker will see something recognizable in the debate about justice. Minimal morality is the “sum of these recognitions.”¹³⁰⁵ However, minimalism cannot be the foundation for a thicker universalism that some philosophers want it to be because it is “reiteratively particularist and locally significant, intimately bound up with the maximal moralities.”¹³⁰⁶ The universalism that Walzer accepts is one again a form of reiteration: there is nothing objective about morality, but morality is something that people everywhere continually engage in. So, what is shared is shared vicariously: when Americans and Western Europeans watch protesters in Prague carrying placards insisting on “Truth” and “Justice,” they see the point but add a meaning of their own that is not present in the protesters’ meaning. We march with the protesters and “we have in fact our own parade.”¹³⁰⁷

Morality is inextricably caught up in the dualism that is the phrase “human society.” It is “universal because it is human, particular because it is a society.”¹³⁰⁸ Societies cannot be anything other than particular, because they share a collective experience that humanity as a whole does not. This means that we cannot give an account of minimalism except in “the idiom and orientation of one of the maximal moralities.”¹³⁰⁹ Even Walzer’s own support for “cultural pluralism” is drawn from the maximalism that is contemporary liberalism.¹³¹⁰ The result is that attempts to criticize other societies quickly move into the confines of a maximal morality. This does not mean that Walzer altogether forbids such criticism. Indeed, he concludes the chapter by reiterating his acceptance of humanitarian intervention as a principle, while insisting that it should take place only in truly exceptional circumstances.¹³¹¹

“Distributive Justice As A Maximalist Morality” and “Maximalism and the Social Critic” are Walzer’s final defense of the particularistic method employed in *Spheres*. The arguments are

mostly reiterations of ones employed in *Spheres* and in *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, with a couple of refinements. Walzer explains that the liberal idea that justice should be arranged so as to suit our life plans depends on the culturally specific idea that a life is lived according to a plan.¹³¹² He then states that he came to the idea of *Spheres* by reflecting on cases in which “the governing principles did not seem to have the universal reach that philosophers commonly look for,” which is why he insisted that justice must depend on the meaning of particular goods to particular people at particular times.¹³¹³ Meanings change over time, as there are no final answers in politics, as in Walzer’s “favorite example” of the cure of souls and of bodies discussed in *Spheres* and in “The Long-Term Perspective.”¹³¹⁴ Justice requires respect for these different meanings, which is what makes justice a maximalist idea: it must reflect “the actual thickness of particular cultures.”¹³¹⁵ Simple equality does not do this. It is a thin idea drawn from moral minimalism, and thus gives no access to particular meanings. Walzer concludes that only inside a maximalist morality can critics go to work.¹³¹⁶ This puts the claim somewhat more strongly than Walzer did in earlier works.

Walzer adds that this defense of particularism is a defense of “democratic idealism” and not of “democracy itself.”¹³¹⁷ The meaning of democracy is itself a culturally specific part of a thick morality. For example, “democracy in China will have to be *Chinese*.”¹³¹⁸ The right to collective self-determination includes the right to determine define the terms of political association, although only if those terms satisfy the “minimal rights” of citizens.¹³¹⁹

“Justice and Tribalism” develops this last idea of the rights of each group to autonomy, and insists on the limits that reiteration imposes on those rights. It therefore looks back to “Nation and Universe” and, as we shall see, looks forward to *On Toleration*, in which a central question is the relationship between toleration of groups and respect for individual rights. Walzer argues that the only “general principle” of international politics is self-determination, which expresses moral minimalism in that arena.¹³²⁰ That principle is a reiterative one and can therefore be expressed in different ways in different times and places. The rest of the chapter works through the different ways in which that has been done, in something akin to an early draft of *On Toleration*’s account of the different regimes of toleration. Walzer concludes the chapter by arguing that, “the negotiation of difference will never produce a final settlement...our common humanity will never make us members of a single universal tribe. The crucial commonality of the human race is particularism: we participate, all of us, in thick cultures that are our own.”¹³²¹ In these thick cultures, our identities may become complex and divided, however, which is what leads Walzer to the topic of *Thick and Thin*’s final chapter.

That chapter is “The Divided Self.” I already discussed “Notes on Self-Criticism,” an earlier version, in the previous chapter of this dissertation. Here I will just add how Walzer relates the idea to the topic of *Thick and Thin*. Walzer argues that all selves are divided in three ways: they play different roles, have different identities, and carry different values.¹³²² This may be the product of social differentiation in pluralist societies. In any case, thick selves can in Walzer’s view be at home only in complex societies, which allow them a chance to play at various roles.¹³²³ Such societies are “thickly differentiated,” and thus culturally particular. Therefore, the divided self is “best accommodated by complex equality in domestic society and by different versions of self-determination in domestic and international society...[It] is not possible to pick out the best [version].”¹³²⁴

4. “Response” in *Pluralism, Justice, and Equality*

In 1995, just over a decade after the publication of *Spheres*, Walzer collaborated with David Miller to co-edit a selection of critical responses to *Spheres*. The result was *Pluralism, Justice, and Equality* (PJ&E).¹³²⁵ More than a decade later, Miller was also to edit the collection of Walzer's essays that is *Thinking Politically*. On each occasion, he also wrote the introduction to the book. Miller is thus one of the philosophers most influenced by Walzer. PJ&E includes pieces critical of the complex equality program in its entirety, most notably Brian Barry's "Spherical Justice and Global Injustice"¹³²⁶ and Richard Arneson's "Against 'Complex' Equality,"¹³²⁷ each of which argues that Walzer's egalitarianism would instantiate a tame form of equality. It also includes refinements such as Susan Okin's "Politics and the Complex Inequality of Gender,"¹³²⁸ and detailed applications of Walzer's argument such as Judith Andre's "Blocked Exchanges: A Taxonomy."¹³²⁹

Of most interest to the historian of Walzer's work is his response to the critics with which the book concludes. In that response, Walzer addresses seven issues: "the meaning and possibility of complex equality; the centrality of democratic citizenship; the danger of complex inequality; the injustice of current international distributions; the role of ordinary morality in distributive justice; the importance of efficiency; and the need for a historical account of social differentiation."¹³³⁰ These both take up issues raised by his critics and demonstrate how Walzer's thought had developed between 1983 and 1995.

The first three issues are in many ways rehearsed in "Exclusion, Injustice, and the Democratic State." Walzer insists again that, although he now recognizes that domination can be produced by possession of multiple goods and not just dominance of one,¹³³¹ there is no particular reason to doubt that a distributive system in which the spheres were adequately separated would lead to some sort of equality of status or, at least, to less anxiety about questions of status.¹³³² Rather, "history and everyday life... suggest a fairly radical scattering of talents and qualities across individuals,"¹³³³ which suggests that complex equality is a real possibility. For it to be achieved, there is a need for citizens to play a larger role than Walzer had envisioned in *Spheres* in ensuring the integrity of the spheres and resolving disputes about the meaning of each sphere.¹³³⁴ In other words, Walzer reiterates that political intervention in the spheres can concern both their boundaries (which he had expected in *Spheres*) and the meaning of the goods that each sphere distributes (which he did not anticipate until "Exclusion, Injustice").

Walzer goes on to argue, against Arneson, that international inequality is a matter of injustice from the point of view of complex equality in so far as it results from imperialism, conquest and domination. Otherwise, it is "morally troubling" but not a matter of justice. Rather, it is something that can be dealt with by "ordinary moral principles regarding humane treatment and mutual aid."¹³³⁵ International inequality is of concern for Walzer but as something that falls within a minimal morality, not as part of the maximalist account that is distributive justice. Ordinary moral values, such as personal responsibility, are likewise "outside or beyond justice." Citizens may invoke them in arguments about the meaning of social goods, but they have no independent role beyond that.¹³³⁶ Walzer adds that efficiency was left out of *Spheres* because it is "relative to social meanings" in that we cannot know what an efficient outcome would be until we know the relative value of the goods being weighed.¹³³⁷ Finally, Walzer concurs with the criticism of Michael Rustin that, to be complete, complex equality needs to show how "actual social processes and conflicts" have hindered the development of complex equality and could be used to help it develop.¹³³⁸ Walzer argues that the history of modernity is one of increasing social differentiation, with markets being freed from religious or political control, church and state being separated, educational institutions achieving autonomy, and so on. As modern life is one in

which “men and women inhabit many different spheres, adapting themselves to different roles, observing different rules, exercising different talents, even fashioning different identities,” complex equality is possible.¹³³⁹ Without social differentiation, there would be no spheres to keep separate. With it, there is always the possibility of making the different spheres more autonomous.

Walzer’s response to the critics of *Spheres* is interesting in a couple of ways. First, it shows the extent to which he remained committed to the notion of complex equality in the mid-1990s and, as a result, of the stability of that idea over his career. Secondly, compared to most of his articles from the era it makes relatively little reference to civil society or to questions of cultural difference (except for a response to a point raised by Joseph Carens on non-Muslim autonomy in an Islamic Republic such as Iran).¹³⁴⁰ I take this to be because multiculturalism became a topic of interest to Walzer mostly due to increased immigration to the USA in the 1990s and the dilemmas that migration posed to radical democrats and to analytic philosophers (notably, to Carens) during that decade. When focused once again on distributive justice broadly conceived, cultural difference was not so much on his mind.

5. “The Civil Society Argument”

In slightly different forms, this article was published in three places in the mid-1990s and was then reprinted in *Thinking Politically* in 2007. It was first given as the Gunner Myrdal lecture at the University of Stockholm in October 1990, then it appeared in *Dissent* as “The Concept of Civil Society” and, under the same name, in a book Walzer edited entitled *Toward a Global Civil Society*. Finally, it was published as “The Civil Society Argument” in a collection of essays edited by Ronald Beiner.¹³⁴¹

This article, together with the brief introduction to *Toward a Global Civil Society*, give the clearest explanation of what Walzer took civil society to be and why he felt it to be important. Civil society is “the space of uncoerced human association and also the set of relational networks – formed for the sake of family, faith, interest, and ideology – that fill this space.”¹³⁴² It fosters popular participation in associational life and allows citizens to develop their capacities for self-rule. Although civil society was significant to the work of the Scottish Enlightenment and to Hegel, its current importance is the result of the “struggle against totalitarianism” in Eastern Europe.¹³⁴³ Its importance to Walzer also reflects the increased salience of ethnic and religious identities – hence the connection between civil society and multiculturalism in his work – and the “new social movements” such as feminism and environmentalism that had forced their way into public consciousness.¹³⁴⁴

Civil society has an ambivalent relationship to the state in Walzer’s work. First, it may be a necessary counterpart so as to prevent the breakdown of associational life and of civility¹³⁴⁵ and to function as a “*setting of settings*” that leaves room for pluralism between spheres of human activity.¹³⁴⁶ Walzer’s purpose in “The Civil Society Argument” is to show that no singular answer to the question of where the preferred setting for the good life is can be given. Leftists who take the good life to be based in the political community or in economic activity, and rightists who valorize the market or the nation are all “wrong-headed because of their singularity. They miss the complexity of human society, the inevitable conflicts of commitment and loyalty.”¹³⁴⁷ As a corrective to these accounts, civil society does suggest the complexity of our lives. It is not a fifth answer because it has no singularity. That is why civil society is a setting of settings, rather than a mere setting, and why it is necessary as a counterbalance to state power (or

any of the other singular answers to the question about the good life). In civil society, all versions of the good life are “tested...and proven to be partial, incomplete.”¹³⁴⁸

On the other hand, civil society is dependent on the state. The state has to “the boundary conditions and the basic rules of all associational activity...It compels association members to think about a common good.”¹³⁴⁹ As Walzer had argued in his response to the critics of *Spheres*, without state power, the danger of tyranny is radically increased. The state is necessary to ensure provision in the sphere of welfare, because “left to itself, [civil society] generates radically unequal power relationships, which only state power can challenge,”¹³⁵⁰ and to provide organizational strategies.¹³⁵¹ Put differently, civil society is necessary to democracy to avoid the breakdown of community, but “there is no community and no common good without social justice,” and civil society cannot ensure social justice.¹³⁵²

This article thus helps us to understand why Walzer is concerned to promote the “critical associationalism”¹³⁵³ that civil society makes possible. Without civil society there is no community. Walzer’s writings on civil society thus go somewhat towards defining him as a communitarian. However, they also illustrate the radical nature of that communitarianism, for it is one in which the community must be egalitarian. Indeed, as we saw, Walzer wants to make the strong claim that an unjust community is no community at all. We saw why that might be in the discussion of “Objectivity and Social Meaning.” If the excluded do not accept the terms that are used to classify them, there is no social construction, and without that no stable set of meanings.

6. *On Toleration* and “The Politics of Difference”

On Toleration is an expanded version of a set of Castle Lectures that Walzer delivered to Yale University’s Ethics, Politics, and Economics program in 1996. The Castle Lectures were “intended to promote reflection on the moral foundations of society and government and to enhance understanding of ethical issues facing individuals in our complex modern society.”¹³⁵⁴ In the book, Walzer explains how he takes toleration to be related to the politics of difference and what toleration requires. It is, he says, possible to defend toleration without defending difference, but he writes “with a high regard for difference”¹³⁵⁵ and argues that the essential of toleration is that “different groups and/or individuals should be allowed to coexist in peace.”¹³⁵⁶ Toleration relates to the politics of difference in two ways: first, it is centrally a matter of accommodating different cultural groups; secondly, there is no right way to accommodate difference, but various different “regimes of toleration” appropriate to different times and places.¹³⁵⁷ The elaboration of the five regimes of toleration – multinational empires, international society, consociations, nation-states, and immigrant societies – forms the heart of the book.

The book starts with a preface, in which Walzer explains how he came to write about toleration, and an introduction, in which he explains his methodology and offers another critique of what he here calls “procedural” approaches to philosophical argument.¹³⁵⁸ Chapter 1, “Personal Attitudes and Political Arrangements,” explains that the book is primarily about accommodation of different ethnic groups, not of eccentric individuals, and not of programmatic political opposition.¹³⁵⁹ Chapter 2, “Five Regimes of Toleration,” is the book’s most important chapter. It provides an account of the different regimes and contains the crucial argument that nation-states and immigrant societies find it harder in important ways to tolerate different ethnic groups than did the old multinational empires.¹³⁶⁰ Chapter 3 takes up the “Complicated Cases” of France, Israel, Canada, and the European Community, none of which fits easily into any of the ideal types of a regime of toleration listed above.¹³⁶¹ Chapter 4 explores the “Practical Issues” of

power, class, gender, religion, education, civil religion, and toleration of the intolerant.¹³⁶² In chapter 5, Walzer addresses the question of identity and explores how toleration might work in postmodern times.¹³⁶³ In the epilogue, he reflects on American multiculturalism and the “centrifugal forces” that tend to break both groups and individuals off from “a presumptively common center.”¹³⁶⁴

“The Politics of Difference”¹³⁶⁵ is based largely on chapters 2 and 5 of *On Toleration*. The most noteworthy feature of the article is its title, which demonstrates the interconnectedness of the politics of difference, toleration, and multiculturalism in Walzer’s work. Furthermore, for the most part, it ignores international society and focuses on the four domestic regimes of toleration.¹³⁶⁶

The most noteworthy part of *On Toleration* is the account of the regimes of toleration, which I will focus on. By a regime of toleration, Walzer means the different institutional arrangements for accommodating difference that are most common historically.

Multinational empires are the oldest of the regimes, as they date back to the empires of Persia and Egypt. In these regimes, groups have no choice but to coexist, for the imperial bureaucracy applies a code that aims to ensure a degree of fairness in relations between the different communities.¹³⁶⁷ The empire generally refrains from interfering in communal life so long as the different communities pay their taxes and maintain peace. This tends to encourage inter-communal toleration, but it does not require it. The communities survive so long as the empire tolerates them. As a result, “Imperial rule is historically the most successful way of incorporating difference.”¹³⁶⁸ The price to be paid is that the empire may be repressive and that it “tends to lock individuals into their communities and therefore into a singular ethnic or religious identity.”¹³⁶⁹ Perhaps the most successful example of imperial toleration was the millet system of the Ottoman Empire.¹³⁷⁰

In international society, toleration is achieved by the norm of state sovereignty, which means that any group that achieves statehood will not be interfered with by external forces, regardless of whether they approve of domestic practices. However, the doctrine of humanitarian intervention is a weak limit of sovereignty: it enables states to use force to prevent atrocities, but does not require anyone to do so.¹³⁷¹

Consociations are the “morally closest” heirs of the multinational empires.¹³⁷² States such as Switzerland and Belgium enable two or three national groups to coexist, but they have to work out the details of their coexistence themselves without an overarching imperial power to enforce it. Thus Walzer concludes that while the idea of a consociation is “attractive,” in practice the regime is vulnerable to changes in demographic or social bases of the various communities, which might threaten “the established pattern,” make one party seem dangerous to the others, and enable a dominant group to reform the consociation as a nation state.¹³⁷³ Lebanon is the obvious example of consociational collapse.

In a nation-state, minorities are tolerated in different ways, but their toleration “rarely extends to the full autonomy of the old empires.”¹³⁷⁴ Normally, toleration focuses on the individual members of groups, who are tolerated first as citizens and then as “stereotypical” members of a particular minority.¹³⁷⁵ Attempts to act out minority culture in public are likely to cause difficulties, as with Muslim headscarves in France.¹³⁷⁶ This means that there is “less room for difference in nation-states” than in the previous three regimes, although that may force minorities to tolerate individual members more, and religious differences have been successfully accommodated in a range of liberal democratic nation-states.¹³⁷⁷

Immigrant societies cannot provide territorial autonomy for the different groups, as most are not clustered in large numbers. So, ethnic groups must sustain themselves as “voluntary associations,”¹³⁷⁸ which makes ensuring the interest of their members difficult. The state in such a society will not act to ensure the survival of any of the groups that it is made up of: it is “neutral among the groups... autonomous in its purposes.”¹³⁷⁹ Individuals are tolerated as such, not as group members, and difference is regarded as a personal matter.¹³⁸⁰ Unlike in nation-states, individuals are not tolerated as stereotypical members of a minority, which leads to the fear that ethnic groups will not be able to maintain their identity and to claims for support from the state for the various groups.¹³⁸¹

Other noteworthy features of *On Toleration* include Walzer’s argument against “procedural” approaches to philosophical argument that would seek a single arrangement for accommodating difference.¹³⁸² Readers of Walzer will find this the most familiar part of *On Toleration*: he notes that peaceful coexistence, “which is what toleration makes possible,” can take many different forms, none of which is “universally valid” but many of which can be valid in particular contexts.¹³⁸³ This is why Walzer proceeds to study “regimes of toleration” in their ideal types and in specific instances, rather than devising ahistorical, abstract arguments as to how we might tolerate one another. We cannot “take all the ‘nicest’ features of... the different arrangements and combine them... [because] often, the things we admire in a particular historical arrangement are functionally related to the things we fear.”¹³⁸⁴ The idea that such a combination is possible is an example of “bad utopianism,” as it ignores the necessity for philosophy to be “historically informed and sociologically competent.”¹³⁸⁵ That is why Walzer seeks in *On Toleration* to provide an account of the historically frequent regimes of toleration.

Related to Walzer’s insistence on a historical account of toleration and rejection of a philosophical account is the fact that he takes toleration to be centrally about accommodation of cultural difference and not of “eccentric or dissident individuals.” This is because eccentrics are easier to tolerate and because it is less problematic if they are not tolerated than if entire ethnic groups are not.¹³⁸⁶ Walzer also does not focus on political competitors for power and asserts that it is not intolerant to ban antidemocratic parties from competing for office. He is concerned with “cultural, religious, and way-of-life differences.”¹³⁸⁷ Finally, he notes that there is a range of attitudes that toleration might describe: resignation, indifference, stoicism, curiosity, and enthusiasm.¹³⁸⁸ Although it might seem that toleration requires us to move along that continuum as far as possible, Walzer insists that everyone who is able to “coexist with an otherness” different from their own cultural form possesses the “virtue of tolerance.”¹³⁸⁹ Regimes of toleration do not depend on which of the personal attitudes citizens possess, although some of them may need to encourage curiosity or enthusiasm.

The “complicated cases” in chapter 3 are noteworthy examples of Walzer’s emphasis on the lived experience of toleration and not on the abstract ideal. The regimes of toleration have actually existed but in delineating them, Walzer inevitably focused on common features that are not always met. Some countries contain elements of various systems. For example, France is the most famous nation-state, but it is also one of the world’s “leading immigrant societies.”¹³⁹⁰ It has not yet defined itself as a pluralist society but insisted on commitment to the republic, but the arrival in France of large numbers of North African Muslim Arabs and Jews who want to be recognized as groups poses a challenge to the nation-state model and may prompt something akin to the millet system.¹³⁹¹

The “practical issues” considered in chapter 4 emphasize the ways in which toleration of groups may come into conflict with the rights of members of those groups. This is most

obviously the case with the examples of education and of religion. This is the reason why the debate over the wearing of headscarves by Muslim women in French schools and places of work is so vexed. Walzer insists that an arrangement allowing Muslims to wear headscarves should be worked out, but goes on to note that if a number of Muslims were then to claim that they were being coerced into wearing a headscarf against their will, “the compromise would have to be renegotiated.”¹³⁹² In both nation-states and immigrant societies, the individual’s right not to be coerced would take precedence over cultural values. This would not be the case in a multinational empire, which is one of the reasons why toleration of cultural difference is easier in the old empires. It also demonstrates how toleration of minority groups comes into tension with the rights of individual citizens. As it seems that individual rights will “win out” in nation-states and in immigrant societies, “communal reproduction” will become less certain and “traditionalists” will have to learn to tolerate different accounts of their religion or culture.¹³⁹³

The final point in *On Toleration* worthy of note is the argument about the difficulty of cultural reproduction in the contemporary world that dominates the final chapter and the epilogue. As post-modern critics such as Julia Kristeva have pointed out, the identity of the self is increasingly challenged and people are starting to view themselves as “divided selves” with no fixed identity.¹³⁹⁴ If we all become strangers, then toleration will be easier. Yet, according to Walzer, the “divided selves of postmodernity seem to be parasitic on the undivided groups of which they come.”¹³⁹⁵ We could not be fully developed individuals without some sort of cultural base to react too. Just as, in the modern world, there was an irresolvable tension between individual and group such as that which the headscarf debate brings to the fore, so in the postmodern world there will be a tension with modernity. We will never be able to overcome the opposition between being citizens and members and being cultural strangers.¹³⁹⁶ Walzer does not mean to dismiss the importance of challenging the identity we have been socialized into, but to insist that the challenge must never be entirely successful. This makes it clear that *On Toleration* echoes two familiar Walzerian arguments. First, political questions are not susceptible to final answers and must always be available for continued debate. Secondly, like the communitarian critique of liberalism, the postmodern critique of modernism cannot be dismissed, but cannot be successful. It is likely to recur perpetually.

7. “On Involuntary Association” and “Deliberation, and What Else?”

This pair of articles is linked both thematically and materially. In 2005 they were to be republished as part of Walzer’s most recent monograph, *Politics and Passion*.¹³⁹⁷ Each article offers a critique of a major current in contemporary liberalism. In “On Involuntary Association,” first published in 1998 in a collection of essays edited by Amy Gutmann on *Freedom of Association*, Walzer argues that most important human associations are subject to various constraints and that freedom of association exists so long as it is possible to break involuntary bonds.¹³⁹⁸ In “Deliberation, and What Else?” he objects to the model of deliberative democracy on the grounds that it ignores crucial aspects of the political process such as education, organization, mobilization, demonstration, bargaining, and fund-raising.¹³⁹⁹

So what ties the articles together is that they reiterate some of Walzer’s long-standing objections to liberal political theory. This does not mean that Walzer wishes to advance an illiberal position. Rather, it reflects the tension that he feels with regard to the abstract liberalism advanced by members of the School for Ethical and Legal Philosophy and, more broadly, by analytic philosophers. Such theorists are apt to downplay the role of socialization and the way in

which we are born as members of particular classes and groups.¹⁴⁰⁰ They are likely to ignore the ways in which available associational forms are culturally determined so that what marriage, for example, means differs in different societies.¹⁴⁰¹ They may well not recognize the importance of our membership of particular political communities.¹⁴⁰² Furthermore, they may downplay the way in which morality functions to limit our ability to exit involuntary associations through creating a sense of obligation to belong.¹⁴⁰³ Finally, they may privilege “quiet, reflective, respectful...[and] rational” argument over “passion, commitment, solidarity, courage, and competitiveness.”¹⁴⁰⁴

As a result, deliberative democrats may make the same mistake as the philosophers Walzer discusses in such pieces as “Philosophy and Democracy” and “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation” and come to think that political decisions can be made once and for all. In practice, political actors are likely “to feel that something has been lost in the negotiating process and to reserve the right to reopen the discussion whenever conditions seem more propitious.”¹⁴⁰⁵ Indeed, Walzer explicitly draws the connection between deliberation and the mode of philosophy that he objects to when he notes that, “Deliberation is not an activity for the demos.”¹⁴⁰⁶ This does not mean ordinary people cannot reason, only that large multitudes cannot plausibly “reason together.” And it would be a great mistake to turn them away from the things they can do together. For then there would be no effective, organized opposition.”¹⁴⁰⁷ Deliberative democracy does not brook popular participation in politics and hence is in tension with equality as a lived experience.

Neither “On Involuntary Association” nor “Deliberation” is centrally about civil society or cultural accommodation, although certainly cultural membership is one of the foremost examples of an involuntary association.¹⁴⁰⁸ As a result, the two articles in many ways resemble Walzer’s earlier work and anticipate his writing since 2000, which we turn to in the next chapter. These articles crop up there again. It is worth noting, though, that in the late 1990s Walzer was still thinking through the problems with liberalism’s appeals to abstractions and already moving towards his developed position on the role of passion and the emotions in political life.

8. “Drawing the Line: Religion and Politics”

Originally a Leary Lecture at the University of Utah College of Law in 1998, “Drawing the Line”¹⁴⁰⁹ reiterates many of the themes of *On Toleration* and demonstrates how they relate to Walzer’s work on passion in politics and on the Jewish political tradition. Walzer does three things in this lecture. He starts by giving an account of the separation between church and state.¹⁴¹⁰ He then offers two critiques of that account.¹⁴¹¹ Finally, he gives his own opinion of how the separation ought to work in the contemporary United States.¹⁴¹²

In Walzer’s account, the separation of religion and politics is “an important democratic value” with three major requirements.¹⁴¹³ Separation needs an institutional divide such that the state dominates the means of coercive power, but is neutral between religions and between religious and secular groups.¹⁴¹⁴ It also requires that the state’s public ceremonies should not coincide with those of any religious group; rather, they must form the basis of a “civil religion...religiosity without a positive religion.”¹⁴¹⁵ Finally, no separation is complete unless there is broad acceptance that all political arguments and alliances are “open, pragmatic, contingent, uncertain, inconclusive, and tolerant.”¹⁴¹⁶ Religion is compatible with the search for final answers, but politics is not.¹⁴¹⁷ (Note the similarity between Walzer’s account here and his views on the relationship between philosophy and politics).

Now the aim of the separation between religion and politics is that “God’s word carries no special authority” in politics.¹⁴¹⁸ The critiques of the separation emphasize the positive role that religion may play in politics and which the separation may jeopardize. The first is a populist argument: religion is a source of excitement in politics and once the separation is established, politics is likely to become “worldly and sophisticated, cautious and pragmatic.”¹⁴¹⁹ Politics without religion will lack “radical hope,” “a narrative of liberation,” “discipline for the long march” and so on.¹⁴²⁰ Thus, ordinary people will lose interest in political life. The result is that politics in which separation exists becomes “a kind of antiseptic liberalism.”¹⁴²¹ The second critique of separation is “communitarian or pluralist.”¹⁴²² On this view, religion creates strong communities and provides “expression of the human need for meaning, enclosure, and intensity.”¹⁴²³ The secularist world is again seen as an antiseptic type of liberalism, one that produces “an alienated world, a society of strangers.”¹⁴²⁴ This critique supports religious toleration, but not the rigid separation.

Walzer’s view is that each of the critiques has force but that neither is quite right. It is “impossible to deny the claims that are made on behalf of passion-in-politics...[or] on behalf of community and solidarity. But it is necessary at the same time to set limits on these claims, so that people committed to different Grand Causes and different communities can live together.”¹⁴²⁵ What we need, in other words, is a regime of toleration, and sure enough Walzer concludes that separation creates just such a regime.¹⁴²⁶ Religious groups ought to be allowed to get involved in debates in the political arena and to appeal to religious ideas when they do so, but they cannot have any coercive power. This means that what is separate is not so much religion and politics, but religion and “state power.” Indeed, we also ought to separate “ethnicity from state power, and even politics from state power.”¹⁴²⁷ What this means is that no religious or ethnic group or political ideology can be allowed a final victory such that they close the door on subsequent debate. In political life, as Walzer frequently reiterates, all decisions are subject to future re-opening. What the separation between church and state should mean is that “all the crusaders, religious and secular alike, are denied the sword (but allowed to fly their banners).” So long as politics remains “an open-ended conflict over interests and values among people who understand that they have to co-exist,” there will be a need for separation. As conflict and co-existence are “permanent conditions,” the separation is here to stay.¹⁴²⁸

III: Themes

1. Multiculturalism

Accommodating group difference was, as we have seen, a central feature of much of Walzer’s work in the mid-to-late 1990s, most notably in *On Toleration*. In the introduction to *Thick and Thin*, he states that, “Difference is, **as it always has been**, my major theme and abiding interest.”¹⁴²⁹ Walzer has, clearly, always argued against singular accounts of social life and distributive justice. However, the adoption of the language of the politics of difference is, it seems to me, a development of his thought that began no sooner than the late 1980s and reached full expression in the middle of the next decade. *Spheres of Justice*, after all, is a defense of “pluralism and equality,” rather than of “difference and equality.” In other words, the major reason why the multiculturalism debate was of such moment to Walzer was that it made it clear to him that American social life is not divided merely into spheres of justice with their own distributive values but made up of different ethnic, religious, and cultural groups with their own

sets of shared values across the spheres. Nonetheless, he maintained the belief that the “democratic state clearly is a world of meanings that we share.”¹⁴³⁰ For Walzer, the major question with regard to multiculturalism is how to maintain the groups that express difference in a society in which the state cannot be committed to the survival of any.¹⁴³¹ It is not whether the groups can share a set of understandings.

Multiculturalism thus becomes for Walzer the great issue in egalitarian politics in the 1990s and helping ethnic groups to build associations in civil society is the descendant of his earlier arguments about socializing the welfare state. This is what is meant by the theory of “meat and potatoes multiculturalism.” According to Walzer, “The strength of multiculturalism depends on the capacity of all its groups to deliver the cultural goods.”¹⁴³² The problem with American multiculturalism is that different ethnic groups have different capacities to provide cultural goods such as places of worship, educational facilities, welfare services, and so on. Despite their differing capacities, however, “no group can make it on its own.”¹⁴³³ Every ethnic group relies to some extent on state support to ensure their survival, which means that “all the multicultural citizens have to work politically to create a state committed to sustaining its own pluralism: to distribute resources in a roughly egalitarian way to all the constituent groups so as to help them help themselves.”¹⁴³⁴ Without a political strategy for mobilizing and subsidizing certain groups, it will be impossible to “rescue individual men and women from dissociation and passivity.”¹⁴³⁵ The state must step in to support a multicultural, pluralist society. Walzer concludes that “Multiculturalism as an ideology is a program for greater social and economic equality.”¹⁴³⁶

These remarks should make it clear why multiculturalism and civil society are such closely related topics for Walzer. In an immigrant society, cultural organizations flourish in civil society, not in the state. Both multiculturalism and other secondary associations in civil society rely on state support, and yet also sit in tension with the state. Walzer argues that the tension between toleration of group difference and the rights of members of minority groups means that “we can never be consistent defenders of multiculturalism or individualism; we can never be simply communitarians or liberals...but must be now one, now the other, as the balance requires...the best name for the balance itself...is social democracy.”¹⁴³⁷

Walzer’s multiculturalism is, therefore, primarily evidence of his ongoing commitment to democratic socialism. It emerged as he worked through the dilemmas raised for democratic socialists by the recent waves of immigration to the USA and, equally importantly, by the increased assertiveness of ethnic groups such as Jews and blacks who were previously taught to be invisible.¹⁴³⁸ Walzer wishes to ensure both “rough” equality and difference. Hence he argues that minority groups need to be integrated politically and economically and to be enabled to maintain their cultural autonomy if they wish to do so (or to assimilate, if that is their choice).¹⁴³⁹ Democratic socialism requires inclusion of all citizens and all groups, but it also requires respect for their different ways of life.

The debate about multiculturalism is, finally, of the utmost importance for assessing Walzer’s ambiguous relationship with communitarianism. We saw in chapter 4 of this thesis that he deemed the communitarian critique of liberalism to be “doomed” to perpetual recurrence: it could never completely succeed, nor could it be sloughed off. This point is reiterated in *On Toleration*, as shown above. In Walzer’s view, democratic socialists are communitarian in so far as they take group identity seriously and reject the abstract individualism of contemporary Anglophone liberalism. Yet they are also committed to preventing toleration of minority groups from sanctioning oppression.

Walzer's relationship to communitarianism – and the fact that that relationship can only really be understood in light of his thoughts on cultural difference – is best shown by his response to Michael Sandel's *Democracy's Discontent*. In that book, Sandel had deepened his critique of the "procedural republic" by arguing that only a reversion to some form of republican politics in which the state fosters the moral virtue of its citizens, and is committed to promoting a particular version of the good life, can save the USA from the "travails" of the "unencumbered self."¹⁴⁴⁰ Walzer starts his response by describing *Democracy's Discontent* as "a wonderful example of immanent social criticism" and insists that he agrees with much of Sandel's depiction and, especially, with its critique of proceduralism.¹⁴⁴¹ Given that the critique was written in 1998, and that in 1997 Walzer had begun *On Toleration* with a critique of the philosophical method that he there called "proceduralism," and given that Walzer and Sandel are two of the most prominent of contemporary figures commonly described as "communitarian," this is not surprising.

However, Walzer goes on to argue that there are two versions of communitarianism: a variant on civic republicanism and a type of pluralism. These are in tension with each other because republicanism sits uneasily with "secondary associations" that claim much of their members' loyalty, while pluralism valorizes such associations.¹⁴⁴² Republicans want citizens' primary affiliation to be to the state, pluralists such as Walzer do not.

A greater distinction relates to the assessment of "under-encumbrance or communal weakness."¹⁴⁴³ In a pluralist society, the vast majority of citizens do not take their attachments to be as decisive a part of their identity as Sandel would have them do. This is especially the case in the USA, which was formed almost entirely by immigrants, who do not have obligations in the same sense as people who live in a long-established communal homeland, because in an immigrant society, "there are many different ways of being what one 'is'. A single identity offers many possible identifications."¹⁴⁴⁴ Recall that, in *On Toleration*, Walzer had argued that nation-states incorporate members of minorities as "stereotypical" members of their ethnic group, while immigrant societies view them as expressing individualized versions of their ethnicity. Immigrants are encumbered selves, to be sure, but they are "lightly and diversely encumbered."¹⁴⁴⁵ Walzer concludes that Sandel's passing over of the American immigrant experience in *Democracy's Discontent* is "astonishing."¹⁴⁴⁶

The fact that the USA is an immigrant society, then, leads Walzer to a communitarian commitment to fostering multiculturalism. We could not be egalitarians if we did not tolerate group differences and allow each group to act out their collective life. However, in an immigrant society such as the USA, identities are more fluid and more complex than republican communitarians such as Sandel suggest, if less fluid and more defined than postmodernists such as Kristeva believe. Walzer argues that Sandel's archetypal communitarian concern about freedom of choice with regard to identity is unnecessary: all that we need is to foster an environment in which people can choose well, and that requires "a mediated group-focused version of distributive justice."¹⁴⁴⁷ Walzer accepts Sandel's claim that distributive justice is a liberal not a republican concept.¹⁴⁴⁸ So, his prescription is a liberal one tinged with a communitarian focus on groups.

Walzer seeks to balance liberalism and communitarianism in a social democratic manner. The debate about cultural accommodation was the central issue about which he tried to find the balance in the 1990s.

2. Civil Society

Civil society continued to loom large in Walzer's thought for two major reasons. The first is that it is the sphere in which cultural difference is played out, which is why it can never be rid of the state's interventions that aim to produce social justice. Civil society has a crucial role to play in fostering an active communal life, but it can never dispense with the need for state power.

The second reason is that civil society is "infinitely open; whatever the membership requirements of particular associations, it is always possible to form a new group."¹⁴⁴⁹ In other words, civil society exemplifies what is for Walzer the crucial distinction between politics and philosophy or religion. In politics, there is no such thing as final closure. Questions can always be reopened and decisions altered. This is required by commitment to democracy and explains why philosophy and religion have to be separated from the state. When we engage in political activity, "we are committing ourselves to an ongoing engagement and a pattern of activity" that is never finished.¹⁴⁵⁰ It can in principle never be finished, for any type of closure would infringe upon democratic rights to self-determination. Civil society appeals to Walzer because, as a "setting of settings," it is a bulwark against single answers to political questions. This is shown most clearly in "The Civil Society Argument," in which Walzer objects to any theory of the good life that would situate it in a single place, whether that is the market, the forum, the factory, or the nation.

3. Education

This minor theme of Walzer's work on the "regimes of toleration" centers on the question of whether the state's teaching the value of its own institutions will compete with our socialization into different communities.¹⁴⁵¹ Walzer believes that it will do so, which is why, in multinational empires, each community normally had full responsibility for its curriculum.¹⁴⁵² In nation-states and immigrant societies, this is unlikely. Schools in the former are likely to aim to produce citizens who are loyal to the republic and "familiar with the style" of the dominant nation.¹⁴⁵³ In the latter, "children are taught that they are individual citizens of a pluralist and tolerant society."¹⁴⁵⁴ Schools aim to teach a culturally neutral form of liberalism. Either of these two approaches is likely to be in tension with the culturally specific teaching children receive from their communities. While the difference can be "a useful lesson in (the difficulties of) mutual toleration,"¹⁴⁵⁵ there are also increasing demands for a multicultural education that teaches children to value their diverse identities and helps strengthen minority groups.¹⁴⁵⁶

Walzer believes that using schools to strengthen identities might entail "educational separation," in which case it should be tolerated only alongside teaching of the values of the state.¹⁴⁵⁷ Thus, he suggests a "civics curriculum" with three major requirements: a history of democracy, a political theory of democratic government, and a "practical political science" of democracy that teaches children how democratic institutions work.¹⁴⁵⁸

The reason why education is problematic in a multicultural setting is, then, that it cannot be "neutral." The "civic curriculum itself will not be multicultural...[for] democratic citizenship is not a neutral idea; it has its own particular history, and it points towards its own (political) culture."¹⁴⁵⁹ Thus, education is an issue for Walzer for the same reason that civic religion is: each points to the limits of the regimes of toleration, or the way in which the state has to foster some sort of unified identity alongside the accommodation of difference. The question is how we can live together while upholding different values. Walzer thinks this is best done by

“accommodating” our multiple identities and not by “opposing” them, for all we need is “political socialization” and not “full-scale conversion.”¹⁴⁶⁰

4. Religion

Religion appears in Walzer’s work in a couple of ways in the 1990s. First, it is a form of cultural difference. Secondly, it is potentially one of the rivals of politics, because like philosophy it may seek final answers and must thus be prevented from gaining state power. Religious arguments are legitimate in politics, but religious toleration is as important as ethnic accommodation.

Walzer’s research interest in Judaism also recurred at the end of the decade with the 2000 publication of volume one of *The Jewish Political Tradition*, which is about authority. This was a project that Walzer had first suggested in 1987 and had worked on for more than a decade.¹⁴⁶¹ It reflects the ongoing influence of Judaism on his thought, most notably with regard to his insistence on interpretive methodology and the possibilities for criticism that that offers.¹⁴⁶² The second volume of *The Jewish Political Tradition*, on membership, was published in 2003, and will be considered in the next chapter of the thesis.

The book presents a selection of texts drawn from many different sources: the bible, the Talmud, Rabbinic commentaries, medieval ordinances, philosophical writings, and contemporary responses.¹⁴⁶³ Walzer wrote the introductory essay for the book as a whole,¹⁴⁶⁴ and drafted the essays that introduce each chapter, although these essays were then redrafted in collaboration with Walzer’s co-editors, Menachem Lorberbaum, Noam Zohar, and Yair Lorberbaum.¹⁴⁶⁵ Walzer also contributed comments on such topics as whether there can be a constitution in monarchic regimes,¹⁴⁶⁶ the targets of prophetic criticism,¹⁴⁶⁷ and pluralism and singularity.¹⁴⁶⁸ Walzer’s arguments are for the most part familiar to readers of his work: for example, he provides a predictable critique of the arguments of Salmon ben Jeroham and Judah Halevi that there is a single correct account of moral truth, and claims that diverse accounts “significantly...enhance our understanding.”¹⁴⁶⁹

For the student of Walzer, the significance of *The Jewish Political Tradition* lies in its use as a source of the influences on Walzer’s thought. In particular, his account of the tradition bears striking resemblance to his account of how social criticism works. Bearing in mind that chapter 3 of *Interpretation and Social Criticism* was on the prophet Amos, this is also not surprising, but it is nonetheless striking. For example, Walzer insists that the Jewish political tradition is marked by “a radical reinterpretation or, better, a series of reinterpretations” of the meaning of the bible.”¹⁴⁷⁰ Like moral principles in general, Jewish ideas are more the product of interpretation than of discovery. Moreover, the tradition is marked primarily by “intertextuality,” or a series of writers addressing each other over the centuries in prolonged disagreement.¹⁴⁷¹ There is a tradition and set of shared understandings, but it is marked more by disagreement over the details than by consensus. Furthermore, that disagreement seems to be perpetual: as in politics, there are no final answers to the questions raised by the Jewish political tradition.

There is also marked continuity of ambition between Walzer’s works in general and the aims of the book, which are to “retrieve,” “integrate,” and “criticize” the tradition.¹⁴⁷² Although the retrieval work of the historian is something that Walzer has done less of over time, it is worth remembering that he started his career doing something similar to the Protestant radicals and that *Just and Unjust Wars* aimed to “recapture the just war for political and moral theory” by looking back to the religious tradition in which it took shape and then arguing with it.¹⁴⁷³ And, as we

have seen, bringing different traditions into conversation with each other, which seems to be roughly what Walzer has in mind by integration, is one of his abiding concerns, as is social criticism. Indeed, he ends his introduction by noting that “scholarly/detached” texts are omitted from the book, because commentary should involve “critical engagement.”¹⁴⁷⁴ Finally, there is a degree of continuity between the topics covered in the *Jewish Political Tradition* and Walzer’s work. This is most clearly the case in volume 2, on membership, which we come to in the next chapter.

IV: Historical Development

As I said in the previous chapter, by the time that we are considering, Walzer had his own fully-fledged research agenda. This does not mean that the traditions that influenced his thought were no longer significant. Indeed, multiculturalism was a topic of note for thinkers in both the traditions of radical democracy and analytic philosophy, and the publication of the *Jewish Political Tradition* testifies to the role that it played in his work in the 1990s.

Walzer’s thinking on multiculturalism is centrally concerned with the attempt to reconcile toleration of group difference with ensuring that groups do not oppress their members. From Walzer’s perspective, analytic philosophers tend to privilege individual rights over group toleration. I have argued earlier in the thesis that studying Walzer enables us to recover a non-individualist branch of the American left. Walzer’s writings on multiculturalism give the clearest expression we have of how Walzer tries to do that. He takes the liberal topic of distributive justice and approaches it in a mode sensitive to the communitarian concern with groups. Likewise, he tries to balance the modernist interest in reconciling individual and group with the postmodern distinction between types of self. We might also say that he seeks to balance radical democracy’s concern with political inclusion and analytic philosophy’s emphasis on rights. Thus, Walzer’s thought is in many ways a synthesis of opposites, or as he puts it a balancing act. That balancing act is in his view social democracy or democratic socialism. So what it is to be a democratic socialist is to balance different approaches and produce a hyphenated or adjectival variant. That, after all, is precisely what democratic socialism is.¹⁴⁷⁵

A balancing act also results in a form of pluralism or respect for difference. Rather than being simply liberals or communitarians, we are sometimes one and sometimes the other, depending on what the circumstances require. There are no final answers in politics and hence a variety of possible answers. Perhaps the most surprising of Walzer’s arguments in the 1990s was that multinational empires were in certain ways more tolerant than are either nation-states or immigrant societies. Walzer does not mean to condone the oppression that imperial bureaucrats frequently carried out, but to suggest the appropriateness of alternative ways of life to our own and to point out how the definition of key terms affects our understanding. Multinational empires are probably not more tolerant of *individuals* than are nation-states and immigrant societies, but they do find it easier to accommodate group difference.

In the 1990s, Walzer shifted from the language of pluralism to the language of difference for the most part. I do not want to suggest that pluralism and difference are synonyms, but they do serve functionally similar roles in his various theories of justice. They serve as Walzer’s counters to the singularity of “procedural” theories based on a couple of principles of justice. Walzer appears to choose his term in one of his balancing acts. When he is not primarily concerned with ethnic or cultural groups, he talks of “pluralism”; when the question is about identity and ways of life, he refers to “difference.” Walzer chooses his terms and his topics as the

situation requires. So in responding to critics of *Spheres in Pluralism, Justice, and Equality*, he makes little reference to group difference and the language is that of pluralism. In most of his work in the 1990s, he talks of difference. In either case, the central question is the same and it is the centerpiece of the democratic socialist agenda: namely, how do we treat one another as equals, while recognizing and respecting the fact that there are different goods in our society and different ways of life that all must be valued? Thus, the work on multiculturalism and the response to critics both advance the complex equality research project.

V: Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that Walzer did two major things between 1993 and 2000. First, he brought to a conclusion his work on the methodology appropriate to the political theorist and showed how that methodology tied together his just war theory with the complex equality research program. He did this by positing a thin, universal minimal morality that co-exists alongside a thick, culturally specific maximal morality. The crucial features of just war theory – respect for human rights and for the principle of self-determination espoused in the norm of state sovereignty – are features of moral minimalism. Distributive justice, on the other hand, is a maximalist topic and so must be particularistic. Secondly, Walzer focused on the question of cultural difference in the American context and sought to explain how civil society and multiculturalism form key parts of the complex equality of social democracy.

The final chapter of the thesis will take our story up to the present day. Since 2000, Walzer has continued his work on the Jewish political tradition, returned to the ethics of war, and focused more extensively on the role of passion in politics.

Chapter 6: Revisions and Summations, 2001-2011

I: Introduction

Obviously, any account of Michael Walzer's thought must be incomplete. Although he turned 75 in March 2010, Walzer's research output is as voluminous as ever. When I interviewed him for this dissertation in April 2010, he was at work on four different projects, the most important of which is the third volume of *The Jewish Political Tradition*, on community, which is he hopes to have published in 2011. Walzer retired from the Institute for Advanced Study in 2008, but retains a position there as Professor Emeritus. Walzer's editorial responsibilities at *Dissent*, which he now co-edits with Michael Kazin, take up a large proportion of his time and require periodic contributions to public political debate on a range of issues. Indeed, arguably the major feature of Walzer's thought in the last decade is that it is that of a public intellectual, with many of his articles being contributions to edited collections that sought out the thoughts of leading scholars on a range of topics. Examples of this include Walzer's participation in a Templeton Foundation discussion of whether the market corrupts morals, his contribution to a debate on whether Will Kymlicka's theory of cultural accommodation could be extended to Eastern Europe, and his contribution to a volume on the role of faith in foreign policy. Including an article by Michael Walzer is now a good way to raise the profile of an academic collection. Several of Walzer's lectures are now available online.¹⁴⁷⁶ This, of course, goes with the territory of being the 68th most prominent public intellectual in the world, as *Foreign Policy* and *Prospect* voted Walzer in 2005.¹⁴⁷⁷

Furthermore, much of Walzer's work has been translated into different languages. This was a trend that started in the mid-1990s and has exploded in this decade. Prior to that, translations of Walzer's monographs had been common. *Just and Unjust Wars* has been translated into Hebrew, Spanish, Italian, German, French, Portuguese, Dutch, Greek, and Japanese, and will shortly appear in Chinese. *Spheres of Justice* appears in Italian, German, Swedish, French, Spanish, Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Portuguese, and Polish. Even *Regicide and Revolution* has been translated into French. An increasing feature of Walzer's recent work has been the publication of collected essays in foreign languages. The first such collection was *Civil Society and American Democracy*,¹⁴⁷⁸ which was published in German in 1992. It was followed by similar selections in Swedish and in French in 1997. Since 2000, seven more foreign-language collections have been published. Walzer's bibliography now extends to 33 books, of which 11 are not available in English. Alongside this trend comes an increased scholarly interest in Walzer's work, which was first evidenced by the publication of Brian Orend's book on him in 2001. In 2008, Siena College hosted a symposium on Walzer's work. Presently, an edited collection entitled *Reading Walzer* is being assembled. Walzer's major works have also been produced in new editions. *Just and Unjust Wars*, which according to Walzer has sold as many copies as all of his other books combined,¹⁴⁷⁹ is currently on its fourth edition.¹⁴⁸⁰

For all that, Walzer's work has made few intellectual departures in the last decade. Rather, he has for the most part revisited themes in his earlier work. This can be seen in *Arguing About War*, one of the three books Walzer has written in English in the last decade,¹⁴⁸¹ which is clearly a sequel to *Just and Unjust Wars*. Walzer updates his theory to account for the increased importance of justice in settlements that Brian Orend and others have pointed out since 1977 and to include greater discussion of the justice of humanitarian intervention.¹⁴⁸² He also provides a

greater account than hitherto of his thoughts on global justice.¹⁴⁸³ However, the fundamental principles of Walzer's just war theory remain unchanged: in his comments on the Iraq War, Walzer continued to ridicule the just war principle of "last resort" on the grounds that we can never reach lastness. Likewise, he continues to maintain that non-combatant immunity is of such importance that simply not intending to cause civilian deaths is an inadequate justification of collateral damage: soldiers must, rather, take "due care" not to cause civilian deaths. As the first of these points was used by Walzer to offer a critique of the French and German opposition to the Iraq War, he has been widely seen as having shifted somewhat to the right in his stance on international politics, even though he in fact opposed the Iraq War on the grounds that the containment regime could have been made to work.¹⁴⁸⁴ Regardless of whether we wish to accept Walzer's position, it is worthy of note to the study of his thought that the principle that he defends here – that just war theory should not incorporate "last resort" as one of the principles of *jus ad bellum* – is one that he has held since the 1970s and is not a post-hoc justification of the Bush Administration.

Similarly, although at times using novel language, Walzer's work on domestic politics – above all, in *Politics and Passion* – mostly reiterates earlier themes. These include the facts that involuntary association is an unavoidable feature of social life, and that liberal theory therefore goes wrong by failing to be sufficiently sociologically sophisticated, and that civil society is useful to bolstering democratic politics but needs state support if it is to help in overcoming inequality. *Politics and Passion*'s major contribution is in bringing Walzer's theory of complex equality up to date by applying it to intellectual and political developments of the last 25 years, such as the rise of deliberative democracy and of the civil society argument, and the increasing awareness of ethnic diversity.

What these things point towards is something of the utmost importance in studying Walzer's thought: its political nature. We have noted in previous chapters his self-understanding as someone who defends the disagreement inherent to politics against the anti-political theorizing of many philosophers. As we shall see, Walzer's debate with Ronald Dworkin and Thomas Nagel about the role of passionate attachments in political life on the occasion of a symposium in honor of Isaiah Berlin reiterates this theme.¹⁴⁸⁵ However, I mean it here in a slightly different sense. The point is that Walzer's choice of topics reflects political concerns and that his work since 2000 demonstrates this more clearly than ever before.¹⁴⁸⁶ Whereas, during the years of the Clinton Administration in the 1990s, he was predominantly focused on issues in domestic American politics, since 2000 the foreign policy of the Bush Administration has necessitated greater focus on the ethics of war, of occupation, and of post-occupation settlements. This is no new development: both *Obligations* and *Just and Unjust Wars* were prompted by the Vietnam War, while the demise of the Soviet bloc had a causal role in leading Walzer to join the debate about civil society. *Thinking Politically* was aptly titled.

This chapter starts by outlining Walzer's three books written since 2000, then considers the articles by grouping them into three major themes: the ethics of war and world politics, passion in politics, and the Jewish political tradition. So, the chapter focuses on Walzer's three central research programs and seeks to relate them to political developments. The themes are of course interrelated. Notably, Walzer's interest in Judaism has both personal and political significance. Personally, he is far from idiosyncratic in becoming more interested in the history of his culture and religion in late middle age.¹⁴⁸⁷ Politically, it is noteworthy that he seeks to bring the Jewish tradition into conversation with other traditions.¹⁴⁸⁸ One of the reasons for Walzer's interest in Judaism is the ethical dilemma posed to that tradition by the fact of

statehood and the crisis that Israel finds itself in because of its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

By the end of the chapter, we will have considered Walzer's thought up to the present day, which will put us in a position to reflect on the importance of his political theory and of this account of the historical development of it. That will be the task of the conclusion.

II: Texts

1. *Arguing About War*

In this 2004 collection, Walzer revises and updates the just war theory advanced in *Just and Unjust Wars* 27 years earlier. In his own self-assessment, his view has been consistent over the years, albeit with shifts in emphasis that require acknowledgement.¹⁴⁸⁹ In particular, he has over the years become more willing to countenance military interventions in other countries, while not dropping the presumption that just wars are defensive ones. Furthermore, he has become more willing to accept the legitimacy of "long-term military occupations" and of nation-building exercises. These two developments lead directly to the major expansion of just war theory to incorporate *jus post bellum* alongside *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*.¹⁴⁹⁰ In other words, alongside an account of when it is just to go to war and of what morality requires during war, Walzer now recognizes that the ending of war is also critical to any complete theory of the just war.

Walzer also notes that arguments about war are an ongoing feature of democratic politics and one that cannot be eliminated.¹⁴⁹¹ The attempt to convert all military action into police action – one of the key impulses among American policymakers during the Korean War and after September 11th – is doomed to failure absent a world state.¹⁴⁹² One of Walzer's topics in *Arguing About War*, and elsewhere, is therefore whether a global state is called for. Walzer expresses skepticism, while acknowledging that further global integration might be useful features of a just world order.

Arguing About War is divided into three parts, the first two of which are comprised of the elements of *Just and Unjust Wars*, namely theory and cases. (Remember that the earlier book was subtitled *A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*). Bearing in mind that Walzer dislikes arguing without supporting cases, this separation is perhaps noteworthy, although, as he points out, none of the pieces in the theory section are intended as philosophical statements. They are all "political engagements".¹⁴⁹³ The third part contains just one article, "Governing the Globe", mentioned in the previous paragraph.

Part one of *Arguing About War*, on theory, is comprised of five articles. Two of these are reprints of articles from the late 1980s, namely "Emergency Ethics" and "Terrorism: A Critique of Excuses",¹⁴⁹⁴ which I discussed in chapter 4 of this thesis. To reiterate, "Emergency Ethics" extends the discussion of the supreme emergency originally developed in *Just and Unjust Wars*. Walzer seeks to mediate between utilitarian and absolutist approaches to the conduct of war. The argument is one of the more "communitarian" of Walzer's; indeed, he even refers to emergency ethics as based on communitarian foundations.¹⁴⁹⁵ Walzer's argument is that in ordinary circumstances the rights defended by absolutists are indeed morally binding on the conduct of war. The principle of non-combatant immunity requires soldiers to take due care when engaged in operations that may risk the lives of civilians. Soldiers must risk their lives to ensure the safety of enemy civilians. However, when faced with imminent defeat against an enemy who would

threaten the life of the political community, political leaders must be prepared to “override” absolutist principles such as that of non-combatant immunity, while recognizing that because such principles can only be overridden and not simply set aside, the leader becomes a “moral criminal”¹⁴⁹⁶ in the process of overriding the principle. The emergency ethics argument is thus intimately related to the position about political leadership and dirty hands that Walzer sketched as early as 1973 in “Political Action”.¹⁴⁹⁷ It is important to note that the supreme emergency applies only when faced with an enemy such as Nazi Germany that might threaten “our deepest values and our collective survival”,¹⁴⁹⁸ and even then only in so far as necessary to avoid defeat. In “Terrorism”, Walzer argues that its proponents do not offer justifications but rather excuses of it, such as it being the only option available to weak communities. He insists that this is true only because terrorist groups cannot mobilize the support of a wider membership. Furthermore, although the claim that oppression causes terrorism is “merely one more excuse”,¹⁴⁹⁹ oppression ought to be tackled now because justice requires it and not because tackling oppression would help minimize the incidence of terrorism.¹⁵⁰⁰

Two of the other three articles in part one are also reprints of earlier work, albeit ones that I delayed discussion of until now. In “Two Kinds of Military Responsibility” (1980),¹⁵⁰¹ Walzer reiterates his defense of non-combatant immunity and argues that military officers must seek to minimize civilian casualties because they have both “hierarchical” responsibilities to their superior officers and to their soldiers and “non-hierarchical” responsibilities to those whose lives they affect that are held by all moral agents.¹⁵⁰² Although the hierarchical responsibilities include a commitment to try not to risk the lives of soldiers unless necessary, such responsibilities come into conflict with the outward responsibilities to civilians. If the conflict is not acknowledged as “a real one”,¹⁵⁰³ the upshot will be that civilians are systematically “subordinated...to military purposiveness...incorporated into the [military] hierarchy at its lowest point”.¹⁵⁰⁴ As the conflict is genuine, it requires institutional mediation that it does not yet receive, but which might be easier in an age in which wars are often fought “for the loyalty of the civilian population”.¹⁵⁰⁵

In “The Politics of Rescue” (1994),¹⁵⁰⁶ Walzer argues in favor of overriding the norm against intervention in cases that “shock the conscience” of humanity.¹⁵⁰⁷ Characteristically, even when Walzer defends a mainstream principle, his argument nonetheless contains non-mainstream elements. In this case, the most noteworthy feature is his willingness to defend unilateral interventions by neighboring states. Walzer argues that the interventions by India in East Pakistan, by Tanzania in Uganda, and by Vietnam in Cambodia were all justified and that in each case there were advantages over multilateral intervention by institutions such as the UN, because neighbors “have some understanding of the local culture”, even if they may also have scores to settle.¹⁵⁰⁸ If trust in multilateral institutions were greater, they might indeed be preferable, but the central problem with regard to intervention is that nobody wants to intervene. Writing in 1994, the year of the Rwandan genocide, and just two years after the American withdrawal from Somalia after the “Black Hawk Down” incident, Walzer would have been all-too-aware that far from interventions being used to justify imperial ambitions, in the contemporary world, lack of interest in humanitarian catastrophe was more likely.¹⁵⁰⁹ These cases also lead Walzer to conclude that long-lasting interventions such as trusteeships, where the intervener rules over the rescued country and tries to construct a state, and protectorates, where the international community seeks to ensure respect for minority rights, might be justified. Rwanda might have benefited from trusteeship, and Bosnia by becoming a protectorate.¹⁵¹⁰

The other chapter in part one is “The Triumph of Just War Theory (And the Dangers of Success)”.¹⁵¹¹ Writing on the 25th anniversary of *Just and Unjust Wars*, Walzer starts by noting

the changes to the environment of just war theory. Realism no longer predominates discussion of international ethics and even military offices speak the language of just war, which has become the central democratic activity that Walzer thinks it should be.¹⁵¹² However, this success raises two dangers. The first is the widespread belief in the possibility of risk-free war making, which many take to be a necessary feature of humanitarian interventions in particular.¹⁵¹³ Yet such interventions are paradigmatic cases in which there can be no genuine risk-free war, because killing on the ground can only be stopped on the ground. Western governments may reduce the risks that their soldiers' face, but only by decreasing their ability to prevent humanitarian massacres. The principle of non-combatant immunity forbids such actions, because they impose risks on others rather than on "our" soldiers.¹⁵¹⁴ Secondly, the ending of war is now complicated: in cases of humanitarian intervention such as the one that never was in Rwanda, regime change may be necessary, but the justice of such an action is radically under-theorized. Walzer concludes that the "argument about endings is similar to the argument about risk: once we have acted in ways that have significant negative consequences for other people...we cannot just walk away...the price of doing well [is] that you acquire responsibilities to do well again".¹⁵¹⁵ A fully developed theory of *jus post bellum* is urgently required and must include an account of "legitimate occupations, regime changes, and protectorates" if just war theory is to maintain its ability to be simultaneously defensive and critical and to criticize particular wars without renouncing war altogether.¹⁵¹⁶

In part two, Walzer applies just war theory to the cases of Iraq (in both 1991 and 2003), Kosovo, the war on terror, and Israel/Palestine. The first essay is a reprint of the introduction to the second edition of *Just and Unjust Wars*, discussed in chapter 4, in which Walzer argues that the Gulf War was a classic case of a just war because it was fought for defensive purposes and that it demonstrates the absurdity of the principle of last resort. Had Kuwait managed to maintain a successful defense until outside allies arrived, there would have been no argument that such allies could not fight because war was a last resort.¹⁵¹⁷ However, even as a just war, the Gulf War required limits, which means that the first Bush Administration was right not to overthrow the Ba'ath Regime but wrong to allow attacks on infrastructural targets that endangered the lives of Iraqi civilians.¹⁵¹⁸ In a short piece on Kosovo written in 1999, Walzer argues that the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia is failing to prevent the Serbian "destruction of Kosovar society".¹⁵¹⁹ It is therefore an example of the perils of "risk-free war-making" and justice requires that troops be sent in to save the people at risk of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo.

In two articles on Israel/Palestine, "The *Intifada* and the Green Line" (1988) and "The Four Wars of Israel/Palestine" (2002), Walzer attempts to recognize both the justice and the injustice of both the Israeli and the Palestinian positions. The *Intifada* had made a significant achievement in restoring the Green Line, which was a prerequisite of any future settlement.¹⁵²⁰ The next requisite is mutual recognition of each side's nationhood. Given Walzer's general belief that such types of recognition must be earned,¹⁵²¹ this is another reason to praise the *Intifada*, which had raised pride among the Palestinians.¹⁵²² The third condition is a great power agreement in which the Soviet Union recognized Israeli sovereignty and the USA recognized that of the Palestinians.¹⁵²³ Finally, any settlement would wait upon a long and difficult negotiating process.¹⁵²⁴ Walzer concludes that the *Intifada* had raised hopes but that the most likely future is "a grim one: stalemate rather than settlement, the *intifada* matched but not beaten by the repression".¹⁵²⁵ Fourteen years later, when that grim prediction had become unfortunate reality, Walzer argued that there were four different wars being fought in the Middle East, two on each side, of which one was just. On the Palestinian side, there is a war to destroy the Israeli

state and a war to create an independent Palestine, while on the Israeli side there is a war to increase Israeli security within its 1967 borders and a war for Greater Israel.¹⁵²⁶ The second and third wars, obviously, are the just ones. Although Walzer continued to endorse the legitimacy of the first *Intifada*,¹⁵²⁷ and to criticize the Israeli settlement movement,¹⁵²⁸ the order in which he presents the wars indicates a general shift towards greater support for the Israeli position.¹⁵²⁹ This is because the “Israeli nationalist right, even the religious right, is a familiar enemy for me, whereas the ideology of death and martyrdom endorsed by many Palestinians is alien”.¹⁵³⁰

Walzer’s thoughts on terrorism, “After 9/11: Five Questions About Terrorism”, (2002) do not reflect a great change from his earlier position as outlined in “Terrorism: A Critique of Excuses”. Again, he takes it to be the case that “a simple materialist explanation” of terrorism will not work: terrorist attacks are not caused by oppression.¹⁵³¹ This is shown by the fact that parts of the world that suffer most from poverty and inequality, such as Africa and Central America, are not “friendly sea[s] in which terrorists swim”.¹⁵³² Islamic terrorists do not fight for freedom but “to restore the dominance of Islam in the lands of Islam”.¹⁵³³ “After 9/11” also reiterates Walzer’s argument that new technologies must not be taken as excuses to avoid imposing risks on our soldiers.¹⁵³⁴ What is most noteworthy about the article is the acceptance of the necessity for “covert action”, because it is impossible to know how to apply the laws of war to such action.¹⁵³⁵ The great danger involved in combating terrorism is, then, that it may upset our categories of justice in war. For example, as Walzer argues, the ethics of war normally forbid assassination of enemy political leaders, who will be necessary negotiation partners in the peace settlement, but permit attack on military leaders.¹⁵³⁶ With terrorist groups, that boundary is blurred, and no negotiation is expected. Walzer does not offer a way out of this dilemma.

Part Two concludes with five short essays on the American invasion of Iraq in 2003. In the first three, which were written between September 2002 and just before the invasion in March 2003, Walzer argues that war would be unjust because the containment regime could be made to work. Walzer’s position, unlike that of his then co-editor at *Dissent* Mitchell Cohen, was hostile to that of the Bush Administration. However, Walzer also opposed the rhetoric of the French, German, and Russian governments and argued that it was because of their unwillingness to help in containing Saddam Hussein by supporting the no-fly zone, expanding the role of UN weapons inspectors, and imposing smart sanctions on Iraq that full-scale war was a possibility.¹⁵³⁷ Had such European powers cooperated in supporting what Walzer calls a “little war”, which had the just end of ensuring that Iraq abided by the terms of the treaty made after the first Gulf War forbidding it from developing weapons of mass destruction, a “big war” fought for the sake of regime change, an unjust aim,¹⁵³⁸ could not have been part of the US agenda. In the fourth essay, written just after the invasion, Walzer argued that now the war was underway it, however unjust, must still be fought in accordance with the principles of *jus in bello* and *jus post bellum*.¹⁵³⁹ In other words, the Bush Administration must seek to do everything possible to minimize civilian casualties and must do what it can to set up a post-Saddam regime that represents all of Iraq’s people and ethnic groups. Finally, in “Just and Unjust Occupations” (November 2003), Walzer embellished on this theme and took the opportunity to further differentiate between *jus post bellum* and the earlier elements of just war theory. Two points are worthy of note: first, even an unjust war can precede a just settlement;¹⁵⁴⁰ secondly, that what a just settlement would involve would be a self-determining regime committed to the welfare of all its citizens and to protection of minority rights.¹⁵⁴¹ Furthermore, the Bush Administration must be prepared to spend whatever money is necessary to reconstruct Iraq. Although Walzer did not

deem regime change a just cause of war, once war had begun, he did consider it important that the new regime be subject to thorough “debaathification”.¹⁵⁴²

Finally, in “Governing the Globe”, Walzer considers seven possible ways of arranging international society spread along a continuum from right to left. On the left is “a unified global state” and on the right is “international anarchy”.¹⁵⁴³ Walzer rejects both these alternatives and moves in towards the center from each side. The problem with those systems that are closer to anarchy is that the states within it might “threaten our values”.¹⁵⁴⁴ The perpetuity of war and oppression are almost inevitable consequences of this arrangement.¹⁵⁴⁵ In the global state, the problem is that while in official rhetoric group interests would lose their relevance, in reality people would continue to value their involuntary associations, and the state would be likely to ignore such particularistic interests, thus harming its citizens’ capacity to pass on their way of life.¹⁵⁴⁶ Walzer’s preferred alternative, which is number four on the scale, would involve “the familiar anarchy of states mitigated and controlled by a threefold set of non-state agents: organizations like the U.N., the associations of international civil society, and regional unions like the EU.”¹⁵⁴⁷ This system would require a UN capable of peacekeeping and humanitarian intervention, but only when backed by its diverse members. Thus the system might still have problems with regard to peacekeeping. It might also fail to promote equality or defend individual liberty sufficiently.¹⁵⁴⁸ Still, all other alternatives are worse and this system the one most likely, in Walzer’s view, to facilitate the pursuit of justice without threatening the “overall cause” of justice.¹⁵⁴⁹

2. *Thinking Politically*

Walzer’s most recent book, *Thinking Politically* is a collection of 17 essays written over the years between 1973 and 2007. Most of Walzer’s books are in some ways edited collections, but *Thinking Politically* was explicitly published as an attempt to bring together in one place a number of his important essays.¹⁵⁵⁰ Walzer’s long-time collaborator David Miller, Professor of Social and Political Theory at Nuffield College, Oxford, edited the volume and added an introduction. (Miller had, it should be remembered, earlier co-edited *Pluralism, Justice, and Equality* with Walzer. Conversely, “What Right’s for Illiberal Communities?” - later republished as one of the essays in *Politics and Passion* - was originally Walzer’s contribution to a book on Miller’s political thought).¹⁵⁵¹ Miller argues that *Thinking Politically* should help new connections in Walzer’s thought appear and thus give us “a better sense of the underlying vision that informs Walzer’s response to particular issues”.¹⁵⁵² Although it in no way reads as a monograph, *Thinking Politically* is indeed probably the most helpful single source for the student of Walzer’s thought, containing as it does essays with his thoughts on a variety of topics, a bibliography listing every one of his publications prior to 2007 (barring the Editor’s Pages of *Dissent*), Miller’s interpretive essay, and an interview with Walzer that was first published in *Imprints* magazine.

That said, as a guide to Walzer’s thought, *Thinking Politically* is in some ways misleading, for at least two reasons. First, with the sole exception of “Political Action”, (1973) every one of the essays in it was written in 1980 or later. By 1980, Walzer was 45, *The Revolution of the Saints*, *Obligations*, and *Just and Unjust Wars* were all in the past, and this thesis was reaching the close of its second chapter. Thus, *Thinking Politically* is, as Miller notes, skewed towards study of Walzer’s mature political thought.¹⁵⁵³ Secondly, only two of the essays – “Exclusion, Injustice, and the Democratic State” and “The Argument About Humanitarian

Intervention” – were originally published as *Dissent* pieces. All of the rest originally appeared in academic journals or edited volumes.¹⁵⁵⁴ Although Walzer always tells people that he starts simply by writing an essay without regard to whether it will be published by *Dissent* or by a journal,¹⁵⁵⁵ this means that *Thinking Politically* is in some ways less representative of the pressing political nature of Walzer’s concerns than, for example, *Arguing About War*, of which the second section is entirely devoted to topical pieces.¹⁵⁵⁶ Miller also notes that the articles chosen for inclusion in *Thinking Politically* are not ones that have since been republished in Walzer’s books, because that would have interfered with the intention of bringing together those works of Walzer that are difficult to collect and that because Walzer is planning to produce a collection of his articles on Jewish political thought and Zionism, *Thinking Politically* does not include such pieces.¹⁵⁵⁷

The major benefit of *Thinking Politically* is that it collects multiple essays on several of the topics of most pressing concern to Walzer. The first three or four essays are on Walzer’s critique of the abstraction of much contemporary political philosophy. These include “Philosophy and Democracy” and “Liberalism and the Art of Separation” (which I discussed in chapter 3), “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation” (chapter 4), and “Objectivity and Social Meaning” (chapter 5). Thus *Thinking Politically* starts with a section devoted to justifying its title and explaining why, to Walzer, political theory must not eschew such things as popular opinion, real talk, self-understandings, and the spheres of justice. The central claim of these chapters, considered as a whole, is that political theory must indeed be political: it must not seek the final answers philosophers are so apt to search out, but must engage with the messy realities of citizen’s lives. The second set of essays turns to what doing so would mean for contemporary theories of justice. These pieces include “Justice Here and Now” (chapter 4), “Exclusion, Injustice, and the Democratic State” (chapter 5), “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism” (chapter 4), and “Liberalism and the Art of Separation”. The third set considers a similar set of questions but focused more on Walzer’s more recent arguments about ethnic diversity and the role of associations, religious groups, and passionate attachments in political life. These essays include “The Civil Society Argument” (chapter 5), “Deliberation, and What Else?” (chapter 5), “Drawing the Line: Religion and Politics” (chapter 5), and “The Politics of Difference: Statehood and Toleration in a Multicultural World” (chapter 5).

Those 11 essays concern mostly domestic politics. The other six are focused on issues in the morality of international politics.¹⁵⁵⁸ In “Nation and Universe” (chapter 4) and “The Moral Standing of States” (chapter 2), Walzer offers a critique of theories that do not respect the moral importance of the political community, or of what he calls “covering-law universalism”. In “The Argument About Humanitarian Intervention” and “Beyond Humanitarian Intervention: Human Rights in Global Society”, Walzer considers cases in which the sovereignty of the state should indeed be overridden or set aside. Finally, in “Terrorism and Just War” and “Political Action: The Problem of Dirty Hands”, Walzer considers the theme of “Emergency Ethics”, namely to what extent political leaders must override moral principles in times of national emergency. The inclusion of “Political Action” is presumably because of it sets the ground for one of Walzer’s most important arguments in *Just and Unjust Wars*, namely the supreme emergency.¹⁵⁵⁹

As I have not previously discussed three of the aforementioned articles, I will say a word more about them here. First, in “The Argument About Humanitarian Intervention”, Walzer stakes out a position similar to that of “The Politics of Rescue”, and argues that the need to rethink the principle of humanitarian intervention (HI) becomes more urgent as its occurrences become more common. Originally conceived as an exception to the norm of state sovereignty, HI

now seems regularly necessary, partly because of greater media coverage of global affairs.¹⁵⁶⁰ Walzer argues that four things follow. First, because regime change is best achieved locally, HI is not justified by every authoritarian violation of human right, but only by genocide and ethnic cleansing, in which case there is too much suffering to wait for a local response.¹⁵⁶¹ Secondly, anyone who can intervene should do so, regardless of whether they might be accused of having mixed motives. Even though the UN might be a preferable implement of international intervention, its frequent inability to intervene means that interventions cannot be left to it alone.¹⁵⁶² Thirdly, interveners cannot expect not to incur risks. Risk-free interventions in fact impose greater risks on the civilians being protected. Furthermore, only on-the-ground interventions are likely to succeed.¹⁵⁶³ Finally, although HI is governed by the principle that interveners should be “in and quickly out”,¹⁵⁶⁴ in many cases withdrawal must wait upon reconstruction of the society so that the massacre does not pick up again once the intervening force has departed. Walzer proposes that the rule should be “in and finally out”.¹⁵⁶⁵ However, the regime that is imposed does not have to be liberal, democratic, or capitalist. The aims of interventions must be minimalist.¹⁵⁶⁶

In “Beyond Humanitarian Intervention”, Walzer asks whether the principles used to justify HI can be used to justify other human rights globally. He approaches the question by asking how such rights might be enforced and who might be responsible for enforcement.¹⁵⁶⁷ Absent social structures of agency and enforcement, rights do not mean much.¹⁵⁶⁸ Walzer thus argues that foremost among our rights is the right to a state that will make our rights effective.¹⁵⁶⁹ Walzer concludes that the case for a right to be provided with food, or helped to do so, turns on whether the causes of hunger – of famine – are human behaviors. Evoking Amartya Sen’s argument as to why democracy is a universal value, Walzer points out that if a famine has a political cause, it is morally necessary to respond to it.¹⁵⁷⁰ So, according to Walzer, the case for HI can move beyond massacre to famine, but no further. Indeed, he claims, moving it as far as that is a major achievement.¹⁵⁷¹ However, the lack of agents beyond the state who are bound to enforce further rights such as the right to religious freedom means that such rights do not have “any meaningful existence in international society”.¹⁵⁷²

Finally, in “Terrorism and Just War”, Walzer extends arguments made in the two articles on terrorism in *Arguing About War*. Terrorism is wrong because it targets entire populations without regard to what the targets have done, and thus violates the just war doctrine of non-combatant immunity.¹⁵⁷³ Although terrorists often claim that membership gives someone a share in collective responsibility, Walzer objects that this is the sort of argument made about members of an army, who share a collective purpose, and cannot be applied to civilian society, which is so disparate.¹⁵⁷⁴ Furthermore, by targeting civilians, terrorists treat them as people who cannot be co-existed or even negotiated with in a political project.¹⁵⁷⁵ So, terrorism cannot ever be justified. However, this does not mean that an absolute ban on it is appropriate:¹⁵⁷⁶ such a position would be inconsistent with Walzer’s argument about dirty hands. In the second half of the article, Walzer argues that the principles of *jus in bello* should apply to the war on terror, because only by sticking to moral principles can we distinguish ourselves from terrorists. He is willing to countenance targeted killing of terrorist leaders, provided that due care is taken as to the targeting and that innocent people are not killed too. Indeed, if the targeted killings take place outside the battle zone, the care that needs to be taken to avoid civilian casualties is far greater than in ordinary war and is more akin to that of police work. Thus those involved in special operations must be prepared to let their target get away rather than risk injuring civilians.¹⁵⁷⁷

3. *Politics and Passion*

In this book, Walzer brings up to date his theory of complex equality within a particular setting or “domestic society”,¹⁵⁷⁸ offering a critique of contemporary liberalism on the grounds that it is not sufficiently well-informed or complex sociologically and is therefore not useful enough for “egalitarian appropriation and use”.¹⁵⁷⁹ It is important to note that Walzer does not deny the egalitarian credentials of liberal theory; rather, he argues that by missing key elements of the complexity of ordinary people’s lives, liberalism fails as a doctrine capable of “encompassing, explaining, and supporting democratic mobilization and solidarity”.¹⁵⁸⁰ Because it cannot engage the energies of democratic citizens, liberalism fosters a society less equal than the principles of its doctrine appear to support. It is therefore in need of periodic “communitarian correction” so as to better “encompass an understanding of politics, sociology, and social psychology”.¹⁵⁸¹

These introductory remarks serve to show how *Politics and Passion* looks back to Walzer’s earlier work in at least two ways. First, the argument about communitarianism serving as a periodic corrector of liberalism by reminding it of the complexity of social life in modernity is central to “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism”, written in 1990 and discussed in chapter 4. Indeed, “The Communitarian Critique” is reprinted in *Politics and Passion* as an unedited appendix.¹⁵⁸² Secondly, the ways in which liberalism fails to understand social life are reflected in its ignorance – or, at least, ignoring – of other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, and particularly of sociology and social psychology. This recalls Walzer’s note in *Spheres* that central to the disagreement between himself and John Rawls, one of the most important of liberal theorists, is that Rawls drew on economics and psychology – and in ways that did not emphasize the complexities of social life – whereas Walzer drew on history and anthropology.

As Walzer acknowledges, the influence of anthropology and sociology on his political theory is in many ways similar,¹⁵⁸³ and his choice of discipline mostly reflects the influence of particular figures at particular times on his thought and on his reading material. The influence of Clifford Geertz following Walzer’s arrival at the Institute for Advanced Study in 1980 explains his usage of anthropology in *Spheres*. Likewise, the growing recognition of the importance of ethnic diversity and gender inequality by such political theorists as Will Kymlicka and Susan Moller Okin since 1990 partly explains Walzer’s turn to sociology in *Politics and Passion*.¹⁵⁸⁴ There is also a theoretical difference. Walzer drew on anthropology and on history to explain how liberal theory downplayed the diversity of human practices and shared understandings between societies that became central to the argument of *Spheres*. In *Politics and Passion*, his focus is less on how different societies are organized differently, partly perhaps because of increased awareness of the fact among liberal theorists. Rather, he is now concerned with liberalism’s failure to acknowledge complexity *within* a society and to insist on the need for “a political theory, and a politics, as complicated as our own lives”.¹⁵⁸⁵

There are two major themes to Walzer’s argument. The first recurs throughout the first four chapters of *Politics and Passion* and expands on the argument of “On Involuntary Association”, which reappears here as the first chapter. Walzer emphasizes the ways in which liberalism fails to understand “our associational life” and hence places mistaken emphasis on individual autonomy and voluntary association.¹⁵⁸⁶ In our lives, many of our important attachments are ones that we have not chosen, which carry important consequences nonetheless for our choices. Their value to people’s lives means that we cannot simply eschew these

unchosen attachments in our political theory.¹⁵⁸⁷ By implying that we can do so, liberalism fetishizes choice at the expense of doing justice to our lived experience.

In chapter 1 of *Politics and Passion*, “Involuntary Association”,¹⁵⁸⁸ Walzer points out four types of as “involuntary constraint” on our ability to associate with whom we please.¹⁵⁸⁹ The first of these is that we are born into a particular family, country, class, and gender. These elements of our social life are strong predictors of our future allegiances to such seemingly voluntary organizations as political parties, as well as of religious affiliation. The upshot is that even though joining associations may be voluntary, such a description is both “partial and incomplete”.¹⁵⁹⁰ The second constraint is cultural: the society in which we are born will determine for us what the available associational forms are by, for example, setting marriage laws and giving us an idea of what it means to form an associational grouping. This means that there is “a radical givenness to our associational life”.¹⁵⁹¹ The third constraint is political: almost everyone is born a member of a political community and those who are not are unlucky rather than free.¹⁵⁹² This makes the political community somewhat akin to a union shop: members willy-nilly become caught up in a set of arrangements that they were not involved in designing. Finally, moral constraints may limit our ability to exit involuntary associations.¹⁵⁹³ Although these constraints make the social world less equal than liberalism would like it to be, we ignore them at our peril, because they make the world what it is and, to reiterate the argument of *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, show that social life is inevitably one of “moral engagement”.¹⁵⁹⁴ Walzer concludes that any “realistic sociology” implies that our lives leave us with obligations that liberal autonomy cannot slough off.¹⁵⁹⁵

Chapter 2 of *Politics and Passion*, “The Collectivism of Powerlessness”, develops this argument by pointing out that modern societies are, contrary to liberal theory’s insistence that power is widely dispersed, marked by “categorical inequality”¹⁵⁹⁶ such that certain groups are systematically excluded from social privileges. These inequalities are enduring and hence difficult to overcome. The stigmatization of women is, for Walzer, the foremost example of such an inequality, as it has occurred in every society of which we have record.¹⁵⁹⁷ Walzer argues that we cannot overcome such inequalities within the liberal model, which focuses on emancipating members of stigmatized groups as individuals. Partly because members of such groups normally value their identity as members and do not want simply to be emancipated, we must also work to empower the various groups to believe that, for example, “Black is beautiful”.¹⁵⁹⁸ Doing this necessitates what Walzer had elsewhere called “meat and potatoes multiculturalism”, whereby ethnic groups are provided with the resources to care for their own communities. Yet the empowerment model will also not work for all groups – for women, for example, most of whom live with men, empowerment cannot work in quite the same way as it can for ethnic minorities who wish to maintain a degree of separation – and so emancipation and empowerment are “necessary features of liberal politics and civil society”,¹⁵⁹⁹ which help to disperse power and as a device of “countervalance”.¹⁶⁰⁰ The key point is that liberal theory’s sociological lack of sophistication renders it incapable of dealing adequately with durable inequality, which can be undermined only by “a mediate redistribution of resources through the cores and peripheries of group life.”¹⁶⁰¹

In chapter 3, “Cultural Rights”, Walzer notes that cultural groups are just such involuntary associations as he has previous referred to and considers what rights they may thus have. The question is particularly difficult in regard to religious or ethnic groups committed to a “traditionalist or fundamentalist” cultural life and which are marginalized, in part as a result of that commitment.¹⁶⁰² Liberal accommodation of such groups is therefore in tension with the

liberal desire to ensure inclusion in the political community on the part of those members of the community who wish to leave. As Walzer noted in his earlier discussion of this topic in *On Toleration*, liberal communities will ultimately have to grant that right of exit. However, he also believes that there is a “strong argument” in favor of tolerating the right of such groups to cultural reproduction, which means allowing them control over the education of their children, and particularly their daughters.¹⁶⁰³ There is, then a dilemma that Walzer cannot entirely work his way out of between the parental right to try to sustain their traditional way of life and the citizens’ right to educate those people who will one day be responsible for sustaining the political community as a whole.¹⁶⁰⁴ Both those projects are justified, so the dilemma can never be finally solved, although should the possession of political power be at stake, the citizens may “tilt decisively” against the traditional group so as to prevent it from imposing its way of life on other citizens.¹⁶⁰⁵

As will probably be obvious, these first three chapters of *Politics and Passion* have gone over much of the ground Walzer earlier visited in the discussion of civil society that we discussed in chapter 5 when talking about his work in the 1990s. In recognition of this, Walzer revisits the civil society argument in chapter 4, “Civil Society and the State”.¹⁶⁰⁶ As before, his argument is that civil society can never dispense with the need for the state, because by itself civil society would result in inequalities that would threaten its ongoing existence. The state must defend equality “while holding pluralism and freedom in balance”.¹⁶⁰⁷ While allowing the associational freedom that is necessary for civil society, the state must ensure that wealth and privilege do not allow dominant groups to entrench their strength. Walzer concludes with four propositions that sum up the argument of the first four chapters of *Politics and Passion*: First, civil society is not simply a collection of voluntary associations; secondly, as a result, it cannot work in a liberal way without the help of the state; thirdly, the state must not only regulate conflicts within civil society but remedy inequalities; fourthly, the state cannot aim to ensure that all the associations of civil society are liberal ones.¹⁶⁰⁸

With that, Walzer’s first theme in *Politics and Passion* is complete. The second theme is developed in the final two chapters. It is that liberal political theory also goes wrong by privileging particular emotions or psychological states at the expense of others. In particular, it favors deliberation, rationality, and reasonableness, and excludes passion. Furthermore, by doing so, it excludes many important political activities from the agenda.

Chapter 5, “Deliberation, and What Else?” is a reprint of an article already considered in the previous chapter of this thesis. In it, Walzer provides a critique of models of deliberative democracy such as that of Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson and that of Henry Richardson.¹⁶⁰⁹ Deliberative democracy downplays the importance of no fewer than 14 central political activities, all of which Walzer thinks are of central importance to the democratic process. These are: “political education”, “organization”, “mobilization”, “demonstration”, “statement”, “debate”, “bargaining”, “lobbying”, “campaigning”, “voting”, “fund-raising”, “corruption”,¹⁶¹⁰ “scut work” and “ruling”.¹⁶¹¹ Indeed, Walzer goes on to state that it is not clear that deliberation would make the list as item 15 if deliberation were only thought of on the model of decision-making in the legal system.¹⁶¹² Such deliberation – which crowds out any form of thought other than the calm, reflective search for truth – does not have “an independent place” in democratic politics, in which political considerations are legitimate.¹⁶¹³ Thus, although deliberative democracy is an egalitarian theory,¹⁶¹⁴ it has potentially undemocratic and, hence, inequalitarian implications. Deliberation cannot be something that “the demos” undertakes together in a large modern state. If we are to value democracy, we must find room for those

activities on the list that can be undertaken together. Otherwise, “there would be no effective, organized opposition to the established hierarchies of wealth and power. The political outcome...is readily predictable: the citizens who turned away would lose the fights they probably want, and might well need, to win.”¹⁶¹⁵ The theory of deliberative democracy is thus part of what Walzer sees as the philosophical distaste for the perpetual nature of political disagreement, here refracted into the liberal misunderstanding of the nature of disagreement in contemporary society.

Chapter 6, “Politics and Passion”, builds on this theme by arguing that it is impossible for a political party to oppose established hierarchies successfully or to campaign for equality without arousing “the affiliative and combative passions of the people at the lower end of the hierarchies.”¹⁶¹⁶ Those passions included envy and hatred, which are the natural consequences of domination. Although liberals therefore fear the passions for good reasons, it is a mistake to exclude them from political life, because passions also include positive features such as “anger at injustice and a sense of solidarity”.¹⁶¹⁷ Furthermore, although the conceptual distinction between reason and passion does indeed make sense, in practice the two are always entangled and the line between them blurred.¹⁶¹⁸ So, for example, although aggression may well be identified with passions, so too is hostility to aggression. The point is that “passionate intensity has...no fixed social form”.¹⁶¹⁹ Walzer advances this claim by the sort of conceptual history that his colleague at the Institute for Advanced Study, Albert Hirschman, made famous in *The Passions and the Interests*.¹⁶²⁰ Walzer notes that in one version of the social imaginary, passion is opposed to conviction, with the former a characteristic of “plebians” and the latter of “aristocrats”.¹⁶²¹ In another story, however, passion is opposed to interest, and becomes an aristocratic trait, while interest is the hallmark of the bourgeoisie.¹⁶²² At certain times, passion can be identified with different social groups and that “all such connections are unstable, and many of them are largely imaginary”.¹⁶²³ Moreover, the arguments used to link passion with particular groups may well be made passionately. Passion need not be undesirable and is, moreover, unavoidable, so it is another failure of liberalism that it so often seeks to remove it from the map of political theory.

Finally, Walzer concludes *Politics and Passion* with a brief conclusion on global inequality. His argument here closely follows that of “The Collectivism of Powerlessness”, as he again advocates a “two-track” approach: first, we must extend international regulation so as to help less affluent states be emancipated from oppressive features of the geo-economy such as terms of trade; secondly, we must empower states to help their own citizens.¹⁶²⁴ Emancipation and empowerment are both necessary features of any complex equality, even though the resulting world will not be “fully egalitarian”.¹⁶²⁵ It is, after all, a hallmark of Walzer’s theorizing that exact equality is a chimera that is no sooner realized than it is undermined by its own simplicity.¹⁶²⁶ Rough equality is all that is possible and all that we need.

III: Themes

As I said at the outset, Walzer’s thought since 2000 has been dominated by three themes. I start by discussing the two of them covered in the books, namely the ethics of war and its relation to world politics and the place of passion in politics, so as to relate what he says in the books to his other published writing and to emphasize the political nature of his concerns, and then turn to his writings on the Jewish political tradition.

1. The Ethics of War and World Politics

Besides his work on this topic in *Arguing About War* and in *Thinking Politically*, Walzer has focused heavily on it in such journal articles as “The Crime of Aggressive War”¹⁶²⁷ and “On Fighting Terrorism Justly”,¹⁶²⁸ in book chapters such as “A Liberal Perspective on Deterrence and Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction”¹⁶²⁹ and “Can There Be a Moral Foreign Policy?”,¹⁶³⁰ in contributions to *Dissent* and the like such as “Is There an American Empire?”,¹⁶³¹ and in the prefaces to the third and fourth editions of *Just and Unjust Wars*.¹⁶³²

A few points are of note. First, Walzer’s writing on this topic illustrates clearly the interconnection between his philosophical positions and his political concerns. This is demonstrated, in part, by the simple fact of his writing about it. In the 1990s, Walzer was more interested in civil society and multiculturalism, although he also began to countenance humanitarian interventions more than before. His arguments on that subject suggest a political influence: Walzer argues that the US should take the initiative in many interventions and that “well-earned suspicions of American power must give way now to a wary recognition of its necessity”.¹⁶³³ Yet, as Walzer notes, friends of his are right to suggest that he would stress the need for wariness more under a Republican than under a Democrat President.¹⁶³⁴ Those words were written in 1995, towards the end of the first Clinton Administration. In the 2000s, the foreign policy of the Bush Administration, and the fact of terrorist attack on US soil, necessarily embroiled Walzer in the debate about the ethics of war once again.

The same point can be made by looking at the choice of topic of the prefaces to the new editions of *Just and Unjust Wars*. Writing the preface to the third edition in the summer of 1999, Walzer was mostly concerned to emphasize how “interventions”, which were a “peripheral” concern when the first edition was published in 1977, “have moved dramatically into the center”.¹⁶³⁵ Humanitarian intervention, which previously evoked mostly “sarcastic comments” suggesting that it was a cover for imperial ambition,¹⁶³⁶ must now be accepted as a moral duty, albeit an “imperfect” one that does not impose a responsibility on any particular moral agent.¹⁶³⁷ Thus, the preface raises five questions similar to those dealt with in *Arguing About War*: 1) “What is the value of sovereignty”?; 2) How much killing is ‘systematic killing’?; 3) “If a war is justified, who should fight it?”; 4) “[H]ow should the intervention be conducted?”; 5) “[W]hat kind of peace should the invading forces seek?”¹⁶³⁸ This preface is brief and Walzer’s arguments are not novel to readers of *Arguing About War*. What makes it noteworthy is its expression of his concern about the world geo-political situation in the late 1990s, following the humanitarian catastrophes in Rwanda, Kosovo, Somalia, and elsewhere. By 2006, when he wrote the preface to the fourth edition, Walzer’s concern had shifted to the ethical legitimacy of regime change, which was forced on the agenda by the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Yet the later preface also bears in mind the problems of the 1990s, and considers the failed intervention in Rwanda in 1994 as also raising the issue of whether regime change is legitimate, because no intervention that allowed the Hutu Power regime to remain in power could have successfully averted the genocide of the Tutsi for long.¹⁶³⁹ Noting that the Allied policy in World War II was that there would be no negotiation with Hitler and that regime change in Germany was thus required, Walzer argues that, “regime change can be justified in the aftermath of a just war”.¹⁶⁴⁰ He also notes that just war theory must allow that genocide, as well as aggression, can be the cause of a just war.¹⁶⁴¹ This implies that regime change can indeed be a reason to go to war. However, he also reiterates his opposition to the Iraq War of 2003, arguing that “force-short-of-war”¹⁶⁴² containment would have been preferable, and that a containment system could indirectly have encouraged regime change in Iraq by increasing the pressure on the Ba’athist regime.

The final way in which Walzer's theoretical concerns can be demonstrated to be politically motivated is by considering his argument about weapons of mass destruction. In "A Liberal Perspective on Deterrence and Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction", Walzer replies to a critique of his defense of mutually assured destruction during the Cold War offered by Henry Shue, Professor of Politics and International Relations at Merton College, Oxford.¹⁶⁴³ Responding to Walzer's argument in *Just and Unjust Wars* that nuclear deterrence could be justified as an example of a supreme emergency, Shue argues that deterrence could not be so justified (at least not for long), because the US could have taken measures to extricate itself from the situation that Walzer accepted to be a supreme emergency.¹⁶⁴⁴ What is noteworthy about Walzer's reply to Shue is that he changes the subject almost immediately, because "other issues... seem to me more pressing".¹⁶⁴⁵ Accepting much of Shue's critique and claiming to feel uncomfortable with the deterrence argument, Walzer focuses instead on proliferation of nuclear weapons. He argues that deterrence "will never be phased out entirely, unless and until some effective way is found to block proliferation".¹⁶⁴⁶ In the new millennium, the crucial questions are not those of the Cold War era. They are the legitimacy of "a policy of selective denial" of nuclear weapons to particular states, and the legitimacy of using force to ensure such denial.¹⁶⁴⁷ Linking proliferation to humanitarian intervention, Walzer argues that one of the most important things for political theorists to think about today is "the moral inequality of states".¹⁶⁴⁸ To reiterate my point: what prompted Walzer to suggest thinking again about the moral equality of states is a change in world politics, not a theoretical departure conceived of in a seminar room or in the armchair of a philosopher.

A second feature of Walzer's recent just war thinking is the ambiguity of its political stance. In the response to Shue, Walzer accepts that *Just and Unjust Wars* makes what is in some sense a liberal argument, albeit one mingled with "Catholic theory and Jewish anxiety".¹⁶⁴⁹ Earlier in his career, and in some ways in his contemporary domestic theory, Walzer had seen himself as anti-liberal. He had also been a much sterner critic of US power than he is now. Indeed, despite his opposition to the Iraq War, Walzer's foreign policy is seen by those on the Marxist left as having shifted markedly to the right.¹⁶⁵⁰ Walzer himself continues to describe himself as a social democrat,¹⁶⁵¹ and argues that he follows "the great majority of Jews" in opting for "near-left" politics.¹⁶⁵² According to Walzer, Jews adopt this position because the memory of persecution pushes them towards the left, but the far left's "rejection of liberalism and pluralism" pushes them nearer to the center.¹⁶⁵³ However, in explaining his position on Jewish attitudes to the conflict in the Middle East, Walzer demonstrates what I already pointed out in the discussion of *Arguing About War*: namely, that his position is now markedly less critical of Israel than it was at the time of the first Palestinian Intifada in the 1980s. For example, he argues that, "it is still necessary to insist that some significant part of [the Palestinians'] trouble is their own doing. They have produced the worst national liberation movement in the history of national liberation".¹⁶⁵⁴ Walzer accepts that Jewish leftists should be critical of Israel but is concerned to add that many of "the left" are overly critical of Israel and insufficiently of Palestinian action. What we need to note here is that Walzer is now frequently engaged in internecine battles on the left.¹⁶⁵⁵ He still considers himself a leftist, but his position is marked as much by opposition to other elements of the left as it is by engagement with the right.

The third feature of Walzer's recent just war theory I wish to point out sits in tension with the second. It is that there is in many ways continuity of concern over time, despite the increased acceptance of humanitarian intervention. As I noted earlier, Walzer retains a commitment to a very strong version of non-combatant immunity, to insisting that double effect can be justified

only if soldiers take “due care” not to harm civilians, rather than just not intending to harm civilians, and to the idea that “last resort” is not a useful feature of *jus ad bellum*. In short, Walzer’s emphasis has changed due to new global tension, but the overall structure of the theory remains intact.

A final feature of Walzer’s work on the ethics of war is that it increasingly elides with the two other aspects of his work in the 2000s, namely the complex equality research program and the research on Jewish political thought. The overlap with Judaism appears practically in the engagement with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and theoretically in his contributions to a volume that he also edited, *Law, Politics, and Morality in Judaism*.¹⁶⁵⁶ In introducing that volume, Walzer notes that the establishment of the state of Israel poses fundamental challenges for Jewish political thought, which had been “essentially the products of exile and exclusion” but must now engage with matters of sovereignty, such as the making of war and peace.¹⁶⁵⁷ In his major contribution to the volume, “Commanded and Permitted Wars”, he makes a study of the Jewish theory of war, arguing that it is “often at cross-purposes with standard just war theory”.¹⁶⁵⁸ Walzer concludes by bringing the argument of the preface to bear on the argument of the chapter. If the Jewish political tradition “is to serve contemporary uses”, he says, “it must address itself to the full range of Jewish experience”, which means bringing it into closer conversation with the just war tradition, and accepting that some wars can be just even though they are neither “commanded” by the Bible nor easily categorized as “permitted” in Biblical terms.¹⁶⁵⁹ Thus, the just war research program and the Jewish political tradition cannot be seen as separate or separable topics.

The elision between the ethics of war and complex equality is even more marked; indeed, in some ways we could argue that Walzer has produced a synthesis between the two that could be called the “ethics of foreign policy” research agenda.¹⁶⁶⁰ This explains his studies of humanitarian intervention and of human rights in global politics, of governing the globe, and of combating terrorism. Walzer’s argument is best summed up in four propositions that he puts forward in “Can There Be A Moral Foreign Policy?” which show the overlap between the ethics of war and other ethical issues in world affairs. According to Walzer, every state has four overlapping moral responsibilities in foreign affairs, which are to protect the lives of its citizens, not to inflict harm on other citizens, to help others when possible, and to build decent political systems.¹⁶⁶¹ In an era in which humanitarian intervention is perhaps the most common type of international conflict, the ethics of war cannot help but be embroiled in ethical issues after the war. Most recently, Walzer’s focus on *jus post bellum* has extended to issues of what we might call “*jus post jus post bellum*”. Having argued in *Just and Unjust Wars*, that the main rule governing interventions should be “in and quickly out”, and revised that view in *Arguing About War* to “in and finally out”, he turned in *Getting Out* to consideration of when military occupations such as the American one in Iraq should end.¹⁶⁶² In his introduction to that edited collection, Walzer argues that the ethics of withdrawal must be considered as a topic in its own right, because just occupations can end in unjust withdrawals and vice versa.¹⁶⁶³ When withdrawing, the safety of the most vulnerable people must be the paramount consideration and “a serious effort” made to estimate the dangers they will face post withdrawal.¹⁶⁶⁴ This effort seems to be somewhat akin to the “due care” that soldiers must take not to threaten civilian lives. But it must not stop occupiers from, eventually, withdrawing.¹⁶⁶⁵

2. Complex Equality and the Passions

As we saw, central to the argument of *Politics and Passion* was the claim that liberal political theory goes wrong by privileging calm, reasonable deliberation at the expense of more passionate modes of argumentation and political involvement. Walzer was by no means alone in criticizing liberalism from the left on this point in the early part of the last decade. Iris Marion Young was perhaps the most prominent figure to concur with him, while not being totally hostile to deliberative democracy.¹⁶⁶⁶ This commonality, and the consistency with which Walzer espoused the point between 2001 and 2006,¹⁶⁶⁷ alerts us to its centrality to his most up-to-date version of complex equality. For Walzer's argument is in large part that the problem with privileging rationality at the expense of passion is that it leaves us with a politics insufficiently susceptible to egalitarian use. If we are to achieve complex equality, or even just a genuine democracy, we must allow for expression of the passions in political life, debate, and theoretical argument.

That Walzer's insistence that we cannot dispense with passionate attachment in contemporary political life is inimical to a certain branch of liberal theory is made clear in a debate between him and both Ronald Dworkin and Thomas Nagel. At a conference convened by New York University to mark the first anniversary of Isaiah Berlin's death, Walzer gave a talk in which he argued that we can sustain our commitments to particular groups while still "living a moral life" only by acknowledging the legitimacy of other people's attachments.¹⁶⁶⁸ According to Walzer, such a defense of our attachment to national communities and the like requires us to accept both the universalizability of our own case and the legitimacy of passionate attachments.¹⁶⁶⁹ His position here therefore invokes both the idea of reiterative universalism expounded in "Nation and Universe",¹⁶⁷⁰ and the account of the passions later developed in *Politics and Passion*. Dworkin, a long-term critic of Walzer whose review of *Spheres of Justice* prompted Walzer to justify his methodology in *Interpretation and Social Criticism*,¹⁶⁷¹ was "alarmed" by Walzer's idea that liberals should stop believing that "particularistic attachment can go away".¹⁶⁷² A lengthy debate ensued, in which Nagel joined in on Dworkin's side.¹⁶⁷³ Dworkin asks for Walzer's permission to aspire to something different than acceptance of nationalistic attachment without being told that "irrevocable human nature" dooms his aspiration to failure.¹⁶⁷⁴ Nagel's position is subtler: he does not deny the existence and power of such attachments, but suggests that a decline in their power would not be politically beneficial.¹⁶⁷⁵

In responding, Walzer does not deny that there may one day be a world in which passionate attachments have no place, but assures Dworkin that it will not happen in either man's lifetime.¹⁶⁷⁶ However, he adds that he cannot imagine "a recognizable human way of life that does not entangle individuals in strong communities – and so require a politics" that grapples with the passions that community membership evokes.¹⁶⁷⁷ For Walzer, the liberal hope of reducing the role of particularistic attachment, and hence of passions, in political life, is part of the old philosopher's dream of an anti-politics. Nagel and Dworkin theorize with insufficient interest in the realities of social life.

Thus, Walzer's defense of passion in politics is an ongoing part of his critique of a particular branch of liberal political theory that privileges philosophical argument more than it ought to. However, Walzer himself is more comfortable than he once was with the label of liberal. We saw this in his response to Shue on weapons of mass destruction. He also accepts the label of "liberal egalitarian" in "Equality and Civil Society" – an earlier version of chapter 4 of *Politics and Passion* – while adding that he is "a displaced social democrat".¹⁶⁷⁸ As I said in discussing Walzer's just war theory, in recent years he has made his peace with liberalism, while continuing to define himself as belonging to the left.

One other point is worthy of note: in a contribution to a discussion of the applicability of Will Kymlicka's account of ethnic rights to Eastern Europe, Walzer accepts that he has probably tended to underestimate the extent to which Americans are suspect to "nationalizing pressures", probably because American Jews are more protected from such pressures than other groups or than any other Jewish Diaspora community in history.¹⁶⁷⁹

3. The Jewish Political Tradition

Walzer has been researching aspects of the Jewish political tradition since the 1980s, producing in the process both *Exodus and Revolution* and *The Jewish Political Tradition*. Since 2000, his research in this area has moved right to the center of his thought. As noted above, David Miller left articles on the subject out of *Thinking Politically* not because they are not an important aspect but because another volume dedicated just to them is planned. Furthermore, Walzer is optimistic that volume 3 of *The Jewish Political Tradition* will be published soon, and expects it to be controversial.¹⁶⁸⁰

The most noteworthy theoretical aspect of Walzer's work on Judaism is that it reveals a relatively a-historicist aspect to his thought. For, Walzer's central concern, revealed in a variety of sources, is to bring the Jewish tradition into conversation with other contemporary intellectual traditions and "serve contemporary uses".¹⁶⁸¹ He does not view the study of Jewish political thought as being simply of antiquarian interest because of his cultural membership and traditions, but as a resource of use to the lives of contemporary Jews and those in their environments. This explains such things as Walzer's argument that the Jewish theory of war needs to be brought into discussion with that of just war theory generally¹⁶⁸² – although note his insistence that "Jewish anxiety" had already motivated his writing of *Just and Unjust Wars*¹⁶⁸³ – and that the Jewish political tradition can help Jews to choose a political stance on the near left.¹⁶⁸⁴

Walzer insists that the halakic order, which he calls the Jewish "normative system", requires "revision and renewal".¹⁶⁸⁵ The reason for this is that two developments in political history have altered the Jewish standing in the world, rendering the legal and moral code that is the Halakah in some ways obsolete. First, Jews have been granted citizenship rights in the democratic states of the Diaspora. Secondly, the creation of the state of Israel means that, for the first time since the Roman conquest, Jewish politics must deal with the fact of relatively untrammled state sovereignty.¹⁶⁸⁶ The history of Jewish exile is such that Jews were unprepared for such features of modern political life as voluntary association, including participation alongside non-Jews in the secondary groupings of civil society, and democratic responsibility, or being responsible for the common weal.¹⁶⁸⁷ In order to deal with these changed realities, the Jewish political, legal, and moral tradition needs to be revised.¹⁶⁸⁸ Recognition of the ways in which the tradition stood in tension to the requirements of sovereignty was, according to Walzer, a major feature of early Zionist thought, such that Zionism was marked by "a deep commitment to the Jewish people and by an equally deep commitment to the transformation of the Jews".¹⁶⁸⁹ This transformation involved a shift in myriad attitudes and values, notably taking the Jews from passivity to action, from subjection to citizenship and from isolation from, to engagement with, the world.¹⁶⁹⁰

In "Universalism and Jewish Values", Walzer argues that the activism of Jews in "universalist political movements" was, in a way, a continuation of their Judaism, but also marked a certain departure from it. His point in this lecture is that the Jewish tradition has always been open to modification, as shown by the abolition of the polygamy around 1000 CE, and that

it can similarly be modified to incorporate new positions, both to accommodate inclusion and sovereignty and to make peace with other political developments such as the feminist demand that women be included in the political community as equals. So, his attempt to modify the tradition to enable it to deal with new political exigencies is in fact “true” to the tradition and does not mean that he mocks it.¹⁶⁹¹

How might the tradition be transformed? The evidence of Walzer’s work, most notably in the arrangement of *The Jewish Political Tradition*, seems to be that renewal would occur as a result of encounter with other traditions of thought and the debate within the tradition that will ensue. If Jewish political thinking is brought into conversation with the just war tradition, or with the civil society argument, or with the study of statecraft, Jews will develop new ways to deal with the challenges wrought by sovereignty and inclusion. Although Walzer is keen to emphasize that Jewish political identity is anomalous in a Christian world because the Jews are both a nation and a religious community,¹⁶⁹² this does not mean that different ethical principles must apply. For example, the Jewish theory of war is, on Walzer’s view, in need of an account of justice in war, because, as noted above, the Jewish argument is often in tension with just war theory. Jewish theorizing about war bears the hallmark of the exile: “a Jewish war was, for almost two thousand years, a mythical beast”.¹⁶⁹³ Thus, Judaism is left with the Biblical categories of commanded and permitted wars. This typology is both “theoretical” rather than “practical” and “incomplete”, because “it has only two categories where three seem necessary”.¹⁶⁹⁴ What is missing is the war that is either banned or forbidden. Walzer argues that it is clearly not the case that all wars are encapsulated by the simple dichotomy of “commanded” or “permitted” because the rabbis express obvious disapproval of some wars. They did so by referring to various conditions that were imposed on the permitted wars. They did not refer to wars that can never be permitted, but it does appear that some authorities, including Nachmanides, frown upon wars of religious conversion or against idolatry.¹⁶⁹⁵ As things stand, however, the only categories are the wars that Jews are commanded to take part in by God – that are *mitzvot* – and those which God permitted as “a concession to Israel’s kings”, and especially to David.¹⁶⁹⁶ Besides the third category, the tradition also lacks “any analyses of underlying principles” and “any casuistic applications”, such as the cases that Walzer used in the argument of *Just and Unjust Wars*.¹⁶⁹⁷ The tradition’s greatest need is “to find some way to a comprehensive and unambiguous account of legitimate and illegitimate, just and unjust, war making”.¹⁶⁹⁸ If the Jewish tradition of theorizing about war is to be of contemporary use, that is, it must incorporate the categories and the methods of non-Jewish¹⁶⁹⁹ just war theory.¹⁷⁰⁰

Walzer also argues that the Jewish tradition has “manifold” resources for the work of renewal. These include, “the long tradition of legal interpretation and controversy...the history of the Jews, the practice of ethical storytelling (*aggadah*), theological reflection, and...secular philosophy”.¹⁷⁰¹ This quote is noteworthy for several reasons. The first thing that it picks out is the fact that Jewish legal scholarship has always based itself on interpretation above all else.¹⁷⁰² As I argued in the discussion of volume 1 of *The Jewish Political Tradition* in chapter 5 of this thesis, what Walzer sees as the long Jewish tradition of interpretation is doubtless of importance in explaining his own commitment to interpretivism adopted in *Spheres* and defended in *Interpretation and Social Criticism*. Secondly, Walzer reiterates the importance of learning from history and, characteristically, privileges that over philosophy. Thirdly, he nonetheless reiterates that among the resources available to the Jewish tradition are those drawn from outside the tradition, so that philosophy becomes a resource that can be used in the revision of Judaism. Finally, the importance that he attaches to “ethical storytelling” not only draws on a long Jewish

tradition, but also resembles that of other leading “communitarian” figures, most notably Alasdair MacIntyre.¹⁷⁰³

Considering the major aspect of Walzer’s writing on the Jewish political tradition – his concern to make it of use to contemporary life – points us towards the other aspect worthy of note for Walzer scholars in his research on Judaism. This is its overlap with Walzer’s other work. Much of my discussion has focused on the relationship between just war theory and the Jewish account of war. Furthermore, Walzer’s writings for a Jewish audience frequently address the same substantive material as his other work. For example, the discussion of Jewish political decision-making in “Can We Choose Politically” closely follows that of “The Four Wars of Israel/Palestine”, which besides being published in *Dissent* was republished in *Arguing About War*. Middle Eastern politics is of interest to Walzer both as a Jew and committed Zionist and as a scholar of the ethics of war and world politics. As with the intellectual traditions noted above, so with the research on Judaism, Walzer’s work in this decades shows a marked tendency towards the breakdown or blurring of lines between different areas of research.

IV: Historical Development

I have argued in previous chapters that Walzer has long ago melded the traditions of thought with which we started as influences into a coherent research agenda of his own. So, the argument in the early chapters that Walzer was influenced by the historicized idealism of his graduate school advisers at Harvard, by the radical democracy of Irving Howe, and by the analytic philosophy of the School for Ethical and Legal Philosophy, slowly developed into the argument of the middle chapters that those influences helped Walzer develop the research projects on complex equality, on the ethics of war, and on the Jewish tradition.

This chapter both continues and revises that story. It continues it in the sense that I have argued that, since 2000, Walzer has mostly rethought old topics, foremost among them the ethics of war, and the need for a theory of *jus post bellum*.¹⁷⁰⁴ It revises it in three senses. First, I noted that Walzer’s research on Judaism, formerly somewhat tangential to his theorizing, has now arguably overtaken the complex equality research program and trails only the ethics of war as Walzer’s main focus. Similarly, I argue that Walzer’s work since 2000 brings out more clearly than ever before that one of the largest influences on his choice of topic is events in world politics. This is why complex equality – now filtered through civil society, the politics of difference, and the regimes of toleration – dominated his thinking in the globalizing, multicultural world of the 1990s. That it was still complex equality that was his concern was shown by the argument that any effective multiculturalism must make provision of “meat and potatoes” first among its priorities. Changing political circumstances also explain why complex equality has lost pride of place to the ethics of war since 2000. In the international climate of the Bush Administration, dominated by the “war on terror”, the question of when regime change is justified and of the justice of occupations seemed to Walzer more pressing than any other concern. Walzer’s response to Henry Shue’s argument about nuclear deterrence, in which he argues that, post-September 11, proliferation is *the* nuclear question is the most direct indication of the political nature of Walzer’s theorizing. However, Walzer’s research is not only, or not always, determined just by what seems to him most important. Although he argues that the Jewish political tradition can be of use to contemporary concerns, his research in this area at least is clearly marked by personal interest as well as by political need.

The final revision made in this chapter is the argument that, since 2000, Walzer has begun to elide the research traditions to a greater extent than hitherto. This is shown by his research on the ethics of war *in* the Jewish tradition, by his concern for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and perhaps by his attention to the war in Iraq and to terrorism, and by his essays on global governance. Hence Walzer's book on justice in war, *Arguing About War*, concludes with "Governing the Globe", in which Walzer argues in favor of international pluralism, while his book on the role of the passions in bringing about complex equality, *Politics and Passion*, ends with "Global Equality", also an argument in favor of international pluralism. With slight modifications, either chapter might easily have been transferred to the other book.

What this should make us aware of is not that the research traditions have no meaning, but that they are intellectual constructs that help us to understand disparate material. It also points to what may be an attempt by Walzer to bring his thoughts together in a coherent whole as he approaches the end of his career. The point can also be related to the earlier argument that by the middle of his career, Walzer developed his own research agenda out of the various influences on him. Just as that did not mean that Walzer was no longer influenced by radical democracy, but that he had developed his own variant on it, so melding the research agendas does not imply that Walzer will not undertake further research on them as relatively discrete entities.

V: Conclusion

This chapter takes our consideration of the political thought of Michael Walzer up to the present day. It does so by providing an account of each of Walzer's three books published in the last decade: *Arguing About War*, which brings up to date the argument of his most commercially successful book *Just and Unjust Wars*, *Politics and Passion*, which does the same for his theory of justice within a society most famously set out in *Spheres of Justice*, and *Thinking Politically*, a collection of his most significant essays on the method appropriate to political theory, on civil society, on the ethics of war, and on morality in political life. It then considers the major themes in Walzer's thought through the lens of his three major research agendas and argues that the line between those three has blurred in recent years. The chapter highlights the political nature of Walzer's theoretical concerns: frequently, his choice of topic reflects a desire to comment on developments in American or world politics. As editor of *Dissent* as well as Professor of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study, Walzer's career combines the positions of political commentator and political theorist.

In the conclusion to the thesis, which follows, I reflect on the importance of a study of Walzer's thought and show how his thought has changed over the decades.

Conclusion

I

In this thesis, I have undertaken an historical study of the political thought of Michael Walzer, seeking both to place his thought in context and to study the development of that thought over the decades. I have argued that such an approach best enables us to understand Walzer's work and, therefore, that it draws out the importance of his contribution in ways unavailable to those who study Walzer simply through philosophical analysis. It does this by demonstrating that Walzer's twin attachments to equality and to social criticism that appeals to a community's shared understandings need not, as seemed inevitable to such critics as Ronald Dworkin and Joshua Cohen, embroil Walzer in attempts to square the circle.¹⁷⁰⁵ Rather, they reflect Walzer's background in the *Dissent* circle, as an activist throughout the civil rights and anti-Vietnam War campaigns, and engagement with a variety of types of movement politics. These things have bequeathed to him conceptions of equality and of political and philosophical argument (and their place in public life) radically different to those of Dworkin and Cohen. For Walzer, we reach equality not by distributing resources differently, but by ensuring that each person and each group prospers in the endeavors that they have spent their lives dedicated to. Doing this requires a political theory that does not abstract from our attachments or deem them irrelevant for questions of justice, but one that recognizes their importance to our lives. Furthermore, it requires a political theory that elevates public debate and the unending rule of reasons over the application of purportedly timeless principles.

In Walzer's view, the egalitarian liberalism of such figures as Dworkin and Cohen could not form the basis of an egalitarian society because it fails to engage with the passions of citizen-activists, largely because of the importance that it attaches to abstract philosophizing, which, Walzer believes, encourages authoritarian exclusion of multiple voices and multiple types of argument from public debate. Informed by his involvement in activist politics ever since the mid-1950s, Walzer's critique of analytic liberalism could be encapsulated by noting that, for him, it asks the wrong questions by failing to sufficiently narrow its scope of enquiry. We should not be concerned with such matters as "What are the appropriate principles of justice for a democratic society whose members view themselves as free and equal?" but with questions such as "What are the appropriate principles that should determine which children go to which school?" and "How should we, here and now, decide how to negotiate disputes between religious minorities and their dissenting members?"

This conclusion recapitulates and summarizes this assessment. I provide an account of Walzer's career arc. I explain why the label of 'communitarian', so frequently applied to Walzer, is more or less vacuous except in highly specific instances such as the argument about emergency ethics and that his preferred label of 'social democrat' ought to be taken seriously. Finally, I consider alternative interpretations of Walzer's thought, in particular that of Orend, so as to emphasize the advantages of adopting an historical approach to the study of Walzer's thought.

II

Over the course of the thesis, I developed two major types of argument. These are related but the distinction between them is, nonetheless, worthy of note. First, there are conceptual arguments about the content of Walzer's work. Secondly, there are developmental arguments about the trajectory of Walzer's career.

The developmental arguments can be briefly summarized. I started with an account of Walzer's early work, in which I noted the influence upon him of various traditions of thought, including the radical democracy of the New York Intellectuals and especially of the *Dissent* circle, the narrative approaches to the study of social science of his advisers at Harvard, and notably of Samuel Beer, and the analytic philosophy of the Society for Ethical and Legal Philosophy. As Walzer himself acknowledges, without Beer's influence, he might never have adopted the approach of using history to illuminate theoretical arguments and using the study of theory to illuminate history that is so striking a feature of his major works, and notably of *Just and Unjust Wars* and *Spheres of Justice*.¹⁷⁰⁶ Yet this is the least of the influences. Walzer's involvement with *Dissent* has now lasted nearly 60 years and continues to occupy a substantial portion of his working week. Likewise, Walzer has been in intellectual discussion with the surviving members of the School and their descendants since the mid-1960s. To give just one example, Walzer's engagement with the debate about minority rights that forms a substantial part of *Politics and Passion* is motivated in large part by the need to respond to Will Kymlicka's attempt to extend the liberal theories of justice of figures such as Dworkin and John Rawls so that they can account for the claims of minority groups.¹⁷⁰⁷

I argued that much of Walzer's early work was inspired by the influence of those traditions or represented an attempt to reconcile various dilemmas that emerged as Walzer absorbed conflicting ideas drawn from the traditions. For example, *The Revolution of the Saints* uses Beer's historical methodology and applies it to a problem quite unfamiliar to Beer himself:¹⁷⁰⁸ namely, the motivation behind the emergence of Protestant dissenters as an early example of a radical movement. Radical politics and its appeal was of interest to the *Dissent* circle, but was only coincidentally of interest to a graduate student in Harvard's Government Department in the 1950s and 1960s. Likewise, the method of casuistry used in *Just and Unjust Wars* in some ways represents a compromise between the strictures of the Society and the instincts of the *Dissent* circle. In the 1970s, analytic political philosophy relied heavily on thought experiments such as Rawls's veil of ignorance and hypothetical examples such as Thompson's railcar. Walzer was always suspicious of such hypotheticals and preferred to use actual examples. Yet in using examples as the crux of almost every argument, he surely pays at least lip-service to their utility in constructing moral theories.

As Walzer's career progressed, I suggested, he developed research agendas of his own that drew on the influences on him while simultaneously transcending them. The research agendas included that into the ethics of war, that into the requirements of complex equality, and that into the Jewish political tradition. Thus, much of Walzer's work from the 1980s onwards, if not before, followed up on insights he had drawn earlier. Of course, Walzer continued to develop his ideas. In the 1990s, he became more likely to research 'the politics of difference' than to provide defenses of 'pluralism'. Yet the latter concern expanded the complex equality research program by bringing within its ambit the questions of the relationship between civil society and the state and of the accommodations that might be made for ethnic minorities.

Finally, in recent years Walzer has been concerned to tie the research agendas together, by such devices as consideration of global governance and justice beyond borders. These questions transcend the concerns of distributive justice and ethics in war and provide links

between them. Walzer does not think that war is likely to be eliminated or that a global state is either desirable or possible, but recent political developments such as the rise in salience of post-war occupations and trusteeships made him consider the ways in which our traditional conceptions of sovereignty and of membership need to be brought up to date.

III

Conceptually, I have argued that readings of Walzer that dub him a “communitarian” fail to do justice to his thought, both because they fail to take seriously his self-description as a democratic socialist and because, as a result, they downplay the significance of his attempt to combine insights from a variety of “-isms”, including socialism, liberalism, communitarianism, and even conservatism.

The latter point is one of the defining features of Walzer’s work, most prominently in “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” which claims that communitarian critique is subject to perpetual return. Like social democracy, it may establish a place for itself alongside liberal politics, but it will never replace it entirely.¹⁷⁰⁹ Likewise, no liberal concessions will ever eliminate the need for communitarian criticism. So, liberalism, communitarianism and social democracy are going to be elements of American society for the foreseeable future. Later on, in *On Toleration*, Walzer argued that the problems raised by cultural accommodation of “greedy” groups requires us to be liberals and communitarians in turn, depending on the political balance of forces, and argues that that balance just *is* social democracy.¹⁷¹⁰ Earlier on, Walzer had argued that liberalism and democratic socialism became indistinguishable at the point at which the different spheres of social life were “socialized”.¹⁷¹¹ In his response to critics of *Just and Unjust Wars*, Walzer accepts the charge that elements of his theory are conservative and is happy to run with it.¹⁷¹²

For Walzer, then, ideological purity is not something that political theories should aim for. Rather, they should draw on any useful argument they can find and utilize it. Factional infighting is to be avoided. Now this is palpably an insight drawn from the *Dissent* circle, which wished to learn from the fate of the American Communist Party and of anti-Stalinist radicalism in the 1930s. Indeed, it is part of the magazine’s *raison d’être*. In *Dissent*’s opening editorial, it stated that the magazine would attempt to discern what in the socialist tradition remained of use and what should be discarded and that it would welcome contributions from a variety of ideological perspectives, excluding only Stalinists and conformists.¹⁷¹³ I noted earlier that *Dissent* has always been criticized for the mildness of its dissenting voice. Part of the reason for this has been its attempt to incorporate elements of the liberal tradition into the socialist project. From the outset, *Dissent* defined itself in part as a “third camp” between American liberalism and Soviet communism.¹⁷¹⁴ As such, its position has been a major influence on Walzer’s thought.

Indeed, Walzer’s argument in “The Communitarian Critique” that social democracy has succeeded in finding a permanent presence for itself alongside liberal politics owes a great deal to Howe’s *Socialism and America*. In that work, Howe argues that any radical movement must base its intellectual roots in liberalism but be clear nonetheless about its departure from the liberal tradition.¹⁷¹⁵ Howe suggests that liberalism and socialism, when properly understood, are indistinguishable from each other in many ways.¹⁷¹⁶ This argument merely reflects long-standing *Dissent* publishing practice: from the late 1950s onwards, it contained discussions of liberal, and even market, socialism. *Dissent* has long held that democratic socialism must incorporate liberal

values such as individual choice and a decentralized economy, must as Walzer has done in such arguments as his defense of welfare provision on the part of religious organizations and other civil society groups.¹⁷¹⁷

The point is that attention to the influences on Walzer's thought helps us to understand what may otherwise seem a puzzling willingness to draw on arguments from a variety of intellectual sources that are often taken to be contradictory. He uses liberal and communitarian arguments without being either liberal or communitarian, because one of his background theoretical assumptions is that those perspectives both have something to teach us, even though each must be rejected when understood to be in opposition to the other.

Walzer's relationship with communitarianism is probably the most important site of this interpretive confusion. As noted repeatedly, a variety of commentators on the "liberal-communitarian debate" have been unable to determine whether Walzer is the communitarian par excellence or the only leading "communitarian" to whom the label is inappropriately applied. Likewise, analytic commentators on Walzer's theory of complex equality have tended to assert that his "communitarian" methodology sits uncomfortably with his socialist or egalitarian commitments. I have argued that, while Walzer is clearly prepared to employ communitarian arguments, and although he does indeed assert the importance of communal membership to both political theory and individual lives, the description is vacuous when taken as an overall label. Yes, emergency ethics may be, as its author accepts, a "communitarian" doctrine.¹⁷¹⁸ Yes, the appeal to shared understandings makes communal life central to an understanding of justice. But, no, Walzer does not base his political theory on an appeal to the innate value of community. As long ago as 1980, Walzer argued in *Radical Principles* that socialists concur with liberals that the state has no "moral being independent of the willfulness and rationality of its particular members" and that "the individual is...the ultimate value."¹⁷¹⁹ I believe that Walzer continues to hold this position. He is, then, not a communitarian in any meaningful sense, but he believes that certain elements of the communitarian critique of liberalism have purchase, because of the latter's failure to allow "any popular role in determining the shape and substance" of the common life that is shared by a political community.¹⁷²⁰

The point so far is that Walzer's "communitarianism" has its roots in his commitment to social democracy, which attaches much greater emphasis than does liberalism to popular participation in decision-making processes and to an activist and engaged citizen body. It reached greater pitch when Walzer attempted to work his way through the central insights of social democracy and the liberalism of the Society for Ethical and Legal Philosophy. Walzer wanted to take seriously the egalitarian credentials of the liberal theory that the Society produced, while explaining why the society that was dominated by the ideals of that theory failed to achieve anything like egalitarian outcomes. His answer was that liberal theory failed to help to promote an egalitarian society because of its lack of "sociological sophistication", or because of its unconcern with what I have referred to as "lived experience".¹⁷²¹ Walzer's complex equality research program, of which *Spheres of Justice* is the major work, utilizes the research agenda and many of the theoretical tools of the Society. However, it does so by bringing it into conversation with the activist concerns of the *Dissent* circle, and by highlighting the importance to equality of issues that go beyond distribution and civil rights. In Walzer's later terms, it highlights the importance of "empowerment" alongside "emancipation".¹⁷²²

What Walzer means is that equality is not simply a matter of ensuring that people have the same rights or legal status, as earlier generations of liberals might have imagined, or even of ensuring equal resources or welfare, as later liberals and many socialists claimed. Equality

properly understood must be more complex than is allowed for in the classical liberal attempt to ensure impartial procedures or the contemporary liberal aim of to ensure that resources are distributed equally or the Marxist goal of providing equal welfare. An equal society must incorporate a rough form of all of these things, but it must do more. It must ensure that the principle that governs the distribution of that resource reflects the meaning of that resource to the people in question, so that each man or woman is king or queen in his or her own area of expertise. This will be a rough form of equality, since there is no single metric by virtue of which we are equal. However, it is on Walzer's view the only type of equality that is possible, for the reasons noted at the start of *Spheres*; namely, that any form of social organization will require positions of responsibility, and those are not in accord with "simple equality". Those opening lines of *Spheres* have an Orwellian feel to them, with their suggestion of the inevitable decline and fall of any egalitarian society. Indeed, *Spheres*, and the research project of which it is the centerpiece, is an attempt to rescue socialism from the travails it faced in the 20th century. It does this by incorporating liberal insights such as the importance of limiting political power and combining them with what Walzer takes to be the essence of socialism, such as the importance of restricting the market and keeping it in its place. For Walzer, both liberals and socialists have important insights to make about the nature of equality, but their accounts are ultimately flawed because they are too simple. Only a complex equality that draws on both traditions can do justice to the multi-faceted nature of contemporary society and the multiple layers that must be included in any egalitarian correction of that society.

In essence, Walzer has been labeled communitarian because he takes theories of justice to be social products and thinks that the equal society will be something that is not just made, but perpetually made and remade. The appeal to shared understandings is, as the next section highlights, an appeal to the endlessness of political debate, and a defense of social democracy rather than community per se. Paying attention to where Walzer draws on the social democratic tradition, and where he departs from it by incorporating liberal insights, is crucial to understanding his work, and its trajectory, and helps to explain why Walzer so frequently appeals to community and yet rejects the tag of communitarian.

IV

One of my central claims in the thesis is that interpretations of Walzer that do not investigate his work historically cannot but fail to capture the conceptual and developmental arguments noted above. Analytic accounts, such as that of Orend, cannot give us as much purchase on Walzer's theory unless they take seriously Walzer's ongoing influences and research agendas and the impact of public developments on his thought.

Orend's study of Walzer – *Michael Walzer on War and Justice*¹⁷²³ - provides a first-rate analysis of Walzer's account of the ethics of war, as well as a critique of elements of that theory that ought to be fleshed out more, notably of *jus post bellum*, Orend's own research specialism. Orend also works hard to show how Walzer's methodological writings and his theory of distributive justice relate to his just war theory. However, Orend treats Walzer's work almost entirely as a set of theoretical problems and hence does not recognize that Walzer's theories are simultaneously political and philosophical. Orend seems to be trapped in a paradigm in which political philosophy is treated as an autonomous sphere of enquiry, and not as something that is inextricably connected to public debate and policy-making.

This comes out clearly in Orend's account of Walzer's argument about why interpretation is a preferable path for political theory than are the rival paths of invention or discovery. To recap, Walzer argues in *Interpretation and Social Criticism* and in *The Company of Critics* that interpretation is the best method of developing a critique of existing power structures, because social critics can hold up a mirror to society and point out how it is not living up to the values that it claims to uphold.¹⁷²⁴ Orend takes the crux of the matter to be about hypocrisy and ignores the political nature of Walzer's insistence that immanent critique is always possible. There is no mention of Marx in Orend's account, nor is there talk of a ruling class. In Walzer's view, the problem of immanent critique is above all about combating domination; it is not just, as Orend implies,¹⁷²⁵ about society failing to remain faithful to its own ideals, but about *how* failure to do so may result in ongoing domination by particular elites. In short, Orend treats as an independent analytic argument a claim that is actually inspired by a long tradition of left radicalism that stretches back at least as far as *The German Ideology*.

Treating political theory as an autonomous arena of enquiry leads Orend to a bizarre misinterpretation of Walzer's account of social criticism such that he accuses Walzer of seeking to empower political theorists and other intellectuals more than a democratic society can warrant, because they are best equipped to offer the 'best reading' of what our shared understandings require.¹⁷²⁶ A casual glance at "Philosophy and Democracy" shows that Orend's suggestion is the reverse of Walzer's intention, for Walzer concludes that article by stating firmly that in the realm of opinion (i.e. the political arena), the philosopher's truth is simply another opinion and entitled to no more respect than any other opinion.¹⁷²⁷ Orend goes wrong by hypostatizing the 'best reading' into an entity, whereas Walzer means by it simply that reading that shifting political majorities happen to endorse at a particular moment in time. The 'best reading' is always subject to change, because there are no final answers in politics.¹⁷²⁸ Unless one assumes that philosophical truth and persuasiveness are identical, there is no reason to fear that philosophers, political theorists or social critics will have undue influence over political argument. If one does assume that rigorous philosophical argument is readily converted into persuasive political rhetoric, then Walzer's complex equality project is a pipedream, because separation of the spheres would just see inequalities endlessly reiterated.¹⁷²⁹

Yet Orend does not make such an argument – does not, in fact, address the issue – because he has misunderstood the purport of Walzer's defense of interpretation and of the 'best reading'. Orend treats "interpretive" as essentially a synonym for "conventional",¹⁷³⁰ and thus concludes that Walzer's arguments are conservative or communitarian, much as Dworkin and Cohen do. However, Walzer's defense of the path of interpretation and appeal to shared understandings is not, or not only, a defense of the communal right to self-determination. It is also about the distribution of decision-making power within any particular community. In Walzer's view, the sort of proceduralism defended by Orend¹⁷³¹ is a function of what he often refers to as the traditional philosophical distaste for the messiness of political life. Throughout Walzer's career, he has been suspicious of political theories that seek to lay out a set of procedures or of principles of justice that determine, once and for all, how a political community (or communities in general) ought to be run. Some set of procedures may be a necessary feature of a just political system in the contemporary Western world, but they cannot be sufficient, and they cannot be value-free.¹⁷³² To think that they can be is to try to close off political debate, and thus to prevent citizens from opening up debates that they may well need to revisit.¹⁷³³ One of the major reasons why Walzer sees the path of interpretation as preferable to those of discovery or invention is that it is endlessly open-ended. There can always be another interpretation and

another occasion for interpretive debate. This is, in his view, something that political theorists ought to valorize rather than fearing. Social criticism is to be preferred to analytic philosophy because it is as old as human society itself¹⁷³⁴ and will thus presumably last as long as human society.

Walzer's arguments here are, surely, the product of his career as an activist. Remember that in both *Political Action* and *Radical Principles* he asserted the importance for movement politics of a series of small victories and denied that only systemic transformation was a worthwhile goal. One of the defining features of social democracy as the *Dissent* circle understands it is that Marxists are wrong to think that limited change within capitalism is chimerical. Marxists, like liberals, often take the purpose of political endeavor or philosophical argument to be the establishment of the perfect society or political system. Walzer pleads the cause of appeal to the 'best reading' of 'our' social understandings in part so as to remind readers that the state will not wither away and that public debate and disagreement are here to stay.

This same misunderstanding of the purport of Walzer's argument is present in a frequent criticism of his argument that the shared understandings of American society mandate a universal healthcare system. In *Justice and Interpretation*, Georgia Warnke argues that Walzer's account is a partial (i.e. partisan) reading of our shared understandings,¹⁷³⁵ while in "To Each His Own", Ronald Dworkin argues that Walzer has given us no reason to believe that minimal universal provision combined with private healthcare above the minimum is not in accord with such understandings.¹⁷³⁶ Yet Walzer takes *any* reading to be a partisan reading, and so Warnke's point cannot be a criticism of his argument that appeal to shared understandings is the fulcrum of justice.¹⁷³⁷ It must, instead, be a criticism of his persuasiveness in defending universal healthcare. The same is true of Dworkin's critique, which seems to assume that Walzer takes there to be a single, uncontestable account of what is in accord with our shared understandings. If Walzer's arguments are widely taken to be unpersuasive, then universal healthcare should not be instantiated, *even though it may well be in accord with our shared understandings*, because the "unavoidable risk of democracy" is that a majority should override a particular institutional setting.¹⁷³⁸ Once again, the point is that a non-contextualist reading of Walzer misses the grounding of his arguments in the social democracy of the *Dissent* circle and its ambivalent relationship to the radical democratic tradition. As a result, Walzer is taken to suggest that his reading should be instantiated in public policy regardless of its persuasiveness to the general public, and his primary commitment to ongoing democratic debate is lost.

By focusing on Walzer's origins as a New York Intellectual and radical democrat, I keep Walzer's commitment to an engaged public life center stage. I also show that developments in Walzer's thought owe a great deal to changing political realities. The key respects in which this is so are with regard to his theory of the just war and his examination of civil society and of the politics of difference. In *Just and Unjust Wars*, Walzer paid little attention to *jus post bellum* and insisted that humanitarian intervention was permissible only in extreme cases. In later editions of that book, and especially in *Arguing About War*, he focused much more attention on post-war settlements, because they were of increased salience in world politics, and gradually became more willing to countenance interventions. By 2010, and the publication of *Getting Out*, Walzer was markedly less insistent than he had been in 1977 that the only just war was a defensive one, although he continued to take defensive wars to be the paradigmatic cases of just wars. This change is the result of such matters as the non-response to the genocide in Rwanda, the two Gulf Wars, the war on terror, and the failed interventions in the former Yugoslavia and in Somalia.

Similarly, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the wave of immigration to the United States that marked the 1990s, led to a change in emphasis in Walzer's theory of complex equality. He increasingly recognized a greater role for the state in determining the content of the spheres of social life (rather than just policing the boundaries between the spheres), and he focused increasingly on ethnic difference rather than on social pluralism.¹⁷³⁹

Walzer's thought has changed over the decades, and has done so largely in response to developments in American and world politics that brought different issues to his attention. Nonetheless, because of his attention to the various research agendas that I have discussed, his thought has been relatively consistent over time, certainly when compared to such contemporaries as Alasdair MacIntyre and John Rawls. We can spot the developments and tie them in to older arguments best by situating his thought in context, which is another reason for studying Walzer's thought historically.

V

Michael Walzer's greatest contribution to political theory has been, I want to suggest, to show the path to a different mode of political theory than that common to the contemporary academy. He has done this through myriad different arguments, but he has also done this without arguing at all. What really sets Walzer's career apart is how he has gone about it. He has, always, acted as both a theorist and an activist, as both a philosopher and a political partisan who seeks to advance the cause of a particular version of democratic socialism, and as both an academic and a public intellectual. Many of Walzer's contemporaries in the academy have also become public intellectuals over the years, and some rank higher than him on the *Prospect* magazine list. Yet for most of the others, status as a public intellectual is a function of success within the academy and reflects the influence of universities on intellectual life more generally. Michael Walzer has become a public intellectual because of the success of his academic writings, but he has also become one in the same way as Irving Howe, Lewis Coser, and other writers for *Dissent*, and for rival publications such as *Partisan Review*, did before him: namely, by writing for magazines that aim to reach a broadly educated, publicly concerned audience. As a result, he has consciously eschewed any claims to impartiality and objectivity.¹⁷⁴⁰ Instead, he has pointed the way to a political theory that is politically engaged, that looks beyond the seminar room, and that addresses directly the issues of the day in a calm, reflective and yet committed way. For this, American intellectual life will long be in his debt.

References and Notes

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- ³ M. Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) and M. Walzer, *The Company of Critics: Social Criticism and Political Commitment in the Twentieth Century*, (New York: Basic Books, 1988).
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- ⁵ B. Orend, *Michael Walzer on War and Justice*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), G. Warnke, *Justice and Interpretation*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993), pp. 13-37 and passim.
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- ⁷ Russell Jacoby is often credited with having started this debate. See his *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe*, (New York: Basic Books, 2000) [1987].
- ⁸ On American radical democracy, see M. Stears, *Demanding Democracy: American Radicals in Search of a New Politics*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).
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Jumonville, *Critical Crossings*, pp. 84-85, and Bloom, *Prodigal Sons*, p. 288. C.f. T. Cooney, *The Rise of the New York Intellectuals: Partisan Review and Its Circle*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), pp. 270-272.

⁴⁸ The key texts here are M. Walzer, "The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism," *Political Theory*, 18 (1990): 6-23, in which he argues that communitarianism will endlessly recur until it finds a permanent place alongside liberalism, as social democracy already has, and Howe, "Socialism and Liberalism," which, 15 years earlier, called for just that permanent coexistence.

⁴⁹ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, contains material of relevance to this position in its discussion of the models of emancipation and empowerment (pp. 21-43), but the core argument is to be found in M. Walzer, "Multiculturalism and the Politics of Interest," in *Insider/Outsider: American Jews and Multiculturalism*, ed. D. Biale, M. Galchinsky, and S. Heschel, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 88-98. See also M. Walzer, "Blacks and Jews: A Personal Reflection," in *Struggles in the Promised Land: Toward a History of Black-Jewish Relations in the United States*, ed. J. Salzman and C. West, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 401-410, and M. Walzer, "Michael Sandel's America," in *Debating Democracy's Discontent: Essays on American Politics, Law, and Public Philosophy*, ed. A. Allen and M. Regan, Jr. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 181.

⁵⁰ M. Walzer, "Philosophy and Democracy," *Political Theory*, 9 (1981): 379-399, reprinted in Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, pp. 1-21, and M. Walzer, "Liberalism and the Art of Separation," *Political Theory*, 12 (1984): 315-330, reprinted in *Thinking Politically*, pp. 53-67.

⁵¹ See, in particular, R. Dworkin, "To Each His Own," the *New York Review of Books*, (14 April 1983), 4-6, and J. Cohen, "Book Review: *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality*," *The Journal of Philosophy*, 83/8 (August 1986): 457-468. Walzer discusses this identification of communitarianism with conservatism in "The Moral Standing of States: A Response to Four Critics," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 9 (1980): 409-429, reprinted in *Thinking Politically*, 219-236.

⁵² Walzer, "Emergency Ethics," in *Arguing About War*, pp. 44-45.

⁵³ Walzer, *Political Action* and Walzer, *Politics and Passion* are the key texts here.

⁵⁴ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. x.

⁵⁵ He states this explicitly in *Thinking Politically*, p. 308.

⁵⁶ See Walzer, *On Toleration*.

⁵⁷ Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, pp. ix-x. Walzer notes that the teaching staff on Beer's class, "Social Science 2," consisted of future "historians, sociologists, and political scientists."

⁵⁸ In, most famously, J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971).

⁵⁹ R. Geuss, "Neither history nor praxis," *European Review*, 11, (2003), 81-92.

⁶⁰ M. Walzer, *Political Action: A Practical Guide to Movement Politics*, (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971). In the preface to that book, Walzer emphasizes that it is "far more the work of an amateur activist than of a professional scientist." (p. 9).

⁶¹ In *Political Action*, Walzer says that he wrote most of the book "immediately following the American invasion of Cambodia" and that the book is "a political response to that event and to the outburst of citizen activism that followed." (p. 9). Walzer was later to state that the initial inspiration for his resuscitation of the just war tradition began with his involvement in the anti-Vietnam movement. See M. Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, (New York: Basic Books, 1977; 4th edition 2006), p. xix.

⁶² Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, p. vii.

⁶³ M. Walzer, *Obligations: Essays on Disobedience, War, and Citizenship*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 9.

⁶⁴ Walzer, *Obligations*, p. xi.

⁶⁵ This is the title of the final chapter of *Obligations*, (pp. 229-240) in which Walzer objects to Marx's picture, in *The German Ideology*, of the life of a citizen in a socialist state who "hunts in the morning, fishes in the afternoon, rears cattle in the evening, and plays the critic after dinner" (p. 229), on the

grounds that it is “curiously apolitical” (p. 229) and does not take sufficient account of the meetings that citizens will need almost constantly to engage in. I consider this point in greater detail later in the chapter.

⁶⁶ As we will see, Walzer frequently refers to Calvin’s conception of politics as being “realistic”, often “surprisingly” so.

⁶⁷ *Obligations* was published in 1970, based on lectures Walzer gave at Harvard University between 1966 and 1969 (*Obligations*, p. v), while *Political Action* was written in early 1970 (*Political Action*, pp. 9-10).

⁶⁸ M. Walzer, “Political Action: The Problem of Dirty Hands,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 2, (Winter 1973), 160-180; M. Walzer, “Regicide and Revolution,” *Social Research*, 40 (1973), 617-642; M. Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974).

⁶⁹ Walzer, *Obligations*, p. v. Walzer says that his “first debt is to the students who listened to them and argued... about them.”

⁷⁰ M. Walzer, *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality*, (New York: Basic Books, 1983), p. xvii.

⁷¹ According to Walzer, Nozick’s *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, (New York: Basic Books, 1974) developed out of his half of the class.

⁷² Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, p. ix.

⁷³ S. Beer, *British Politics in the Collectivist Age*, (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1965).

⁷⁴ M. Bevir and D. O’Brien, “From Idealism to Communitarianism: The Inheritance and Legacy of John Macmurray,” *History of Political Thought*, Vol. XXIV, No. 2 (Summer 2003), 321.

⁷⁵ Bevir and O’Brien, “From Idealism to Communitarianism,” 321.

⁷⁶ Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, p. x.

⁷⁷ Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, p. x. It is worth noting that Richter was one of the first students of the British idealists.

⁷⁸ Bevir and O’Brien, “From Idealism to Communitarianism,” 321.

⁷⁹ Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, p. ix.

⁸⁰ B. Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*, (Beacon Press, 1966).

⁸¹ For example, he lists five conditions that enabled liberal democracies to develop: a) the development of a counterbalance to a strong crown or landed aristocracy; b) a weakening of the landed aristocracy; c) the development of commercial agriculture; d) the failure of the aristocracy to form a coalition with the bourgeoisie against peasants and workers; e) revolutionary breaks from the past. Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, p. 430.

⁸² Walzer, *Political Action*, p. 10. In 1980, Walzer was to dedicate *Radical Principles: Reflections of an Unreconstructed Democrat*, (New York: Basic Books, 1980) to Howe, as well as to all his other “comrades” on Dissent.

⁸³ An interesting story about the Walzer’s relationship with Howe is that Judith reports that both she and Michael were “surprised”, on visiting the Howe’s at their home in the Boston suburbs in 1956, at how “stable” and “bourgeois” their life-style was for such prominent radicals. G. Sorin, *Irving Howe: A Life of Passionate Dissent*, (New York: New York University Press, 2005), p. 171. The words quoted are attributed as direct quotes of Judith Borodovko Walzer.

⁸⁴ *Radical Principles: Reflections of an Unreconstructed Democrat*.

⁸⁵ Walzer, *Political Action*, p. 9.

⁸⁶ “A Day in the Life of a Socialist Citizen,” is the last of the essays in *Obligations* and is discussed at length below.

⁸⁷ As late as *Spheres of Justice*, Walzer would still have an ambiguous relationship with socialism.

⁸⁸ Howe died, at the age of 72, in 1993.

⁸⁹ Walzer, *Political Action*, pp. 120-121.

⁹⁰ Walzer, *Political Action*, p. 121.

⁹¹ M. Walzer, *Thinking Politically: Essays in Political Theory*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 307-308.

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- ⁹² Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 308.
- ⁹³ Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, p. xv.
- ⁹⁴ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 307.
- ⁹⁵ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 307.
- ⁹⁶ Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, p. x.
- ⁹⁷ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 307. C.f. Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. xxvii.
- ⁹⁸ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 308.
- ⁹⁹ His parents were of course still significant influences at this stage as well. *The Revolution of the Saints* is dedicated to them.
- ¹⁰⁰ Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, p. ix.
- ¹⁰¹ Walzer, *Obligations*, p. viii. The quote, transcribed in Hebrew and addressed to “J.T.B.W.”, means, “Do two walk together, unless they have made an appointment?” (Amos 3:3)
- ¹⁰² Walzer, *Political Action*, p. 10.
- ¹⁰³ Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, p. ix. The section to which Walzer refers is drawn from chapter 5, “The Attack Upon the Traditional World,” pp. 148-198.
- ¹⁰⁴ Walzer, *Political Action*, p. 15.
- ¹⁰⁵ Walzer, *Political Action*, p. 18.
- ¹⁰⁶ J.-J. Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, (London: Penguin, 1968 [1762]), pp. 59-62, 72-74. According to Rousseau, the general will is concerned with the interest of the community as a whole, the will of all is an agglomeration of individual wills.
- ¹⁰⁷ Walzer, *Obligations*, pp. 49-50.
- ¹⁰⁸ Walzer, *Obligations*, pp. 90-99.
- ¹⁰⁹ Walzer, *Obligations*, p. 98.
- ¹¹⁰ Walzer, *Obligations*, pp. 169-189.
- ¹¹¹ Walzer, *Obligations*, pp. xiv, 10, 90-92.
- ¹¹² Walzer, *Obligations*, p. 98.
- ¹¹³ Walzer, *Obligations*, p. 230.
- ¹¹⁴ Walzer, *Obligations*, p. 231.
- ¹¹⁵ Walzer, *Obligations*, p. 98.
- ¹¹⁶ Walzer, *Political Action*, pp. 32-43. C.f. M. Walzer, “‘Citizens’ Politics’: How to Do It,” *Dissent* (June 1971), 252-257.
- ¹¹⁷ Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, p. vii. It should be noted that Walzer immediately continues to say that, while writing the book, he realized that choosing to become a Puritan was a decision not so very different from others that he found neither strange nor disturbing.
- ¹¹⁸ Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, p. vii, 45-57, 199-231.
- ¹¹⁹ Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, pp. 6-7 and passim.
- ¹²⁰ Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, pp. 12-13.
- ¹²¹ Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, p. 48.
- ¹²² Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, p. 2.
- ¹²³ These publications are, in order: “Anti-Communism and the CIA,” *Dissent*, (May-June 1967), 274-280; “The Condition of Greece: Twenty Years After the Truman Doctrine,” *Dissent* (July-August 1967), 421-431; “The Exodus and Revolution: An Exercise in Comparative History,” *Mosaic*, vol. 8 (1967), 6-21; “Moral Judgment in Time of War,” *Dissent*, (May-June 1967), 284-292; “The Obligation to Disobey,” *Ethics*, 77 (1967), 163-175; and “On the Role of Symbolism in Political Thought,” *Political Science Quarterly*, 82 (1967), 191-204.
- ¹²⁴ Walzer, “Political Action: The Problem of Dirty Hands”.
- ¹²⁵ Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, p. 28.
- ¹²⁶ Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, p. 18. This is, according to Walzer, the central thesis of the book.
- ¹²⁷ Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, p. 8. C.f. pp. 300-306.
- ¹²⁸ Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, p. 300.

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- ¹²⁹ Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, p. 301.
- ¹³⁰ Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, p. 303.
- ¹³¹ Walzer, *Political Action*, pp. 120-121.
- ¹³² Walzer, *Political Action*, p. 125. Italics in original. For Walzer's warnings about the dangers of revolutionary tactics see chapters 3, 4, and 22-24, among others.
- ¹³³ Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, pp. 31-44.
- ¹³⁴ M. Sandel, "The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self," *Political Theory*, vol. 12, no. 1 (1984), 81-96. C.f. M. Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent: America in Search of a Public Philosophy*, (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996).
- ¹³⁵ Walzer, *Political Action*, p. 121. C.f. *Obligations*, pp. 203-204.
- ¹³⁶ Walzer, *Political Action*, p. 121.
- ¹³⁷ Walzer, *Political Action*, p. 122.
- ¹³⁸ Walzer, *Obligations*, pp. 237-238.
- ¹³⁹ Walzer, *Obligations*, p. 231.
- ¹⁴⁰ Walzer, *Obligations*, pp. 226-227.
- ¹⁴¹ Walzer, *Obligations*, p. 188.
- ¹⁴² Walzer, *Obligations*, p. 189.
- ¹⁴³ Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, p. xiv.
- ¹⁴⁴ M. Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).
- ¹⁴⁵ Walzer, *Obligations*, pp. 227-228.
- ¹⁴⁶ The earliest of which is "A Journey to Israel," *Dissent* (November-December 1970), 497-503, and the most ambitious of which are the volumes on the Jewish political tradition, which I will discuss in later chapters.
- ¹⁴⁷ The ethics of war is an important one of these, as is his interest in the political community. The essay in *Obligations* on "The Obligations of Oppressed Minorities," (pp. 46-70) is an early example.
- ¹⁴⁸ Walzer, *Obligations*, p. 73.
- ¹⁴⁹ M. Walzer, *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994).
- ¹⁵⁰ Walzer, *Obligations*, p. 68.
- ¹⁵¹ Walzer, *Obligations*, p. 68.
- ¹⁵² Walzer, *Obligations*, pp. 68-69.
- ¹⁵³ Nearly 25 years later, in *Thick and Thin*, Walzer would argue that the fact that he and other western radicals could identify with the Czech demonstrators carrying placards demanding "peace" and "justice" in late 1989 demonstrated the existence of a universal morality, but the fact that they did not understand the detailed implications of the demands of the Czechs showed the necessity of an ideational context to apply to each thick morality. Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, pp. 1-6.
- ¹⁵⁴ Walzer, *Obligations*, p. 145.
- ¹⁵⁵ Walzer, *Obligations*, p. 144.
- ¹⁵⁶ Walzer, *Obligations*, p. 144. C.f. M. Walzer, "Democracy and the Conscript," *Dissent* (January – February 1966), 16-22.
- ¹⁵⁷ Walzer, *Political Action*, p. 32.
- ¹⁵⁸ Walzer, *Political Action*, p. 40.
- ¹⁵⁹ Walzer, *Political Action*, pp. 40-41.
- ¹⁶⁰ Walzer, *Political Action*, p. 43.
- ¹⁶¹ Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, p. 66.
- ¹⁶² For details see Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, pp. 68-74, 92-100, respectively.
- ¹⁶³ Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, p. 66.
- ¹⁶⁴ Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, p. 67.
- ¹⁶⁵ Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, pp. 70-71.
- ¹⁶⁶ Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, p. 67.

¹⁶⁷ Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, p. 100.

¹⁶⁸ Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, p. 103.

¹⁶⁹ It is perhaps noteworthy that Walzer makes the same point about Calvin in comparison to Luther. See *The Revolution of the Saints*, pp. 22-30.

¹⁷⁰ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, pp. 307-308.

¹⁷¹ Walzer, *Obligations*, p. 73.

¹⁷² And this point applies to at least some extent even for a thinker such as Hobbes who on some readings would have seen his study of politics as a science based on the principles of Euclidean geometry.

¹⁷³ See for example, Q. Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978; two volumes. Vol. 1 – The Renaissance; Vol. 2 – The Age of Reformation.)

¹⁷⁴ We already saw Rousseau's influence on Walzer's theory of political obligation, and Marx's on Walzer's view of life under socialism. In *Spheres of Justice*, Walzer was to cite Mill as the authority when seeking to forego any reliance on rights-based arguments (p. xv). We will encounter Hobbes more in later chapters.

¹⁷⁵ Walzer, *Obligations*, p. ix. The quote from Hook comes from his *The Paradoxes of Freedom*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), p. 106.

¹⁷⁶ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. xxii.

¹⁷⁷ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. xxii. That involves considering the arguments of such figures as Maimonides, Aquinas and Suarez. Note also, of course, that *Just and Unjust Wars* is "a moral argument with historical illustrations." Whether Skinner would accept the notion of peppering a moral argument with historical illustrations is open to doubt.

¹⁷⁸ M. Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution*, (New York: Basic Books, 1985).

¹⁷⁹ Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, p. xviii.

¹⁸⁰ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, pp. 67-94.

¹⁸¹ M. Walzer, *Politics and Passion: Toward a More Egalitarian Liberalism*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), p. xii.

¹⁸² M. Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, (Basic Books, New York, 1977, 2nd edition 1992, 3rd edition 2000, 4th edition 2006), p. xxii. Unless stated otherwise, page numbers refer to the 4th edition of the book.

¹⁸³ In the acknowledgements, Walzer states that he started his research in the academic year 1971-72 while he was "working at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in Stanford." *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. xxvii. It might be more accurate to state that Walzer worked on just war theory for most of the 1970s, as "The Moral Standing of States: A Response to Four Critics," in *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 9, (1980), 209-229 reiterates some of the major arguments of *Just and Unjust Wars*.

¹⁸⁴ Nozick, on the other hand, published *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, in 1974, almost a decade before *Spheres of Justice* (1983) was to appear in print.

¹⁸⁵ Walzer, *Radical Principles*.

¹⁸⁶ Walzer, "A Day in the Life of a Socialist Citizen," in *Radical Principles*, pp. 128-138. Despite misgivings, Walzer reproduced the article because it "properly belongs to the series of articles on the New Left that makes up Part II of" *Radical Principles* and because it is one of his favorite of his essays (p. 302). The two articles from 1964 are "Social Origins of Conservative Politics" (pp. 78-91) and "Modernization" (pp. 189-200), originally published as "The Only Revolution: Notes on the Theory of Modernization," *Dissent* (Fall 1964), 432-440.

¹⁸⁷ M. Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution: Speeches at the Trial of Louis XVI*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), pp. 1-89.

¹⁸⁸ Walzer, "Political Action: The Problem of Dirty Hands." Citations to this article are to its reprinting in *Thinking Politically*, pp. 278-295.

¹⁸⁹ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, pp. 237-256. An earlier version was published in *Dissent*, (Fall 1973), 399-408.

¹⁹⁰ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 242.

¹⁹¹ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 303.

¹⁹² This is related to, but not identical with, the theme of political action that was discussed in the previous chapter. Here the central issue is the way in which particular political contexts set the agenda for political theory.

¹⁹³ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. xxiv.

¹⁹⁴ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 157, (from “Notes for Whoever’s Left”, pp. 157-167).

¹⁹⁵ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 157.

¹⁹⁶ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 79.

¹⁹⁷ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 175.

¹⁹⁸ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 176.

¹⁹⁹ Walzer makes this argument in “The Pastoral Retreat of the New Left,” in *Radical Principles*, pp. 175-185, originally published in *Dissent* (Fall 1979), 406-411.

For reasons I cannot discern, *Radical Principles* is cited both in *Thinking Politically*’s bibliography of Walzer’s work (p. 315) and in Walzer’s CV (<http://www.sss.ias.edu/community/faculty-cv/walzercv.pdf>) as having been published in 1977. Besides the fact that the book itself states its publication date as 1980, the fact that it includes articles such as “The Pastoral Retreat of the New Left” that were written after 1977 should resolve any doubt as to when it was published.

²⁰⁰ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 306. Note that the subtitle of *Just and Unjust Wars* is “A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations.”

²⁰¹ For the claim that *Philosophy and Public Affairs* grew out of the discussions of the Society for Ethical and Legal Philosophy, see *Thinking Politically*, p. 306.

²⁰² Three key articles that express the feeling that the movement had not succeeded and was in decline are the second three of Part II of *Radical Principles*, namely “Notes for Whoever’s Left” (pp. 157-167) and “The Pastoral Retreat of the New Left,” (pp. 175-185), which have already been cited, and “The Peace Movement in Retrospect” (pp. 168-174), which seeks to explain why US involvement in Vietnam lasted so long despite popular opposition to it.

²⁰³ For example, in “Political Action: The Problem of Dirty Hands” p. 286, *Radical Principles*, p. 73, and “The Moral Standing of States: A Response to Four Critics,” p. 234. Citations to “The Moral Standing of States” are to its reprinting in *Thinking Politically*, pp. 219-236.

²⁰⁴ Such as: the discussion of the death of Richard II (*Regicide and Revolution*, p. 3), Henry V’s boast about the burdens of kingship (*Regicide and Revolution*, p. 9), Richard II’s claim that “Not all the water in the rough rude sea/Can wash the balm off from an anointed king” (*Regicide and Revolution*, p. 18) and his claim that by allowing himself to be deposed he is a traitor (*Regicide and Revolution*, p. 43), Henry V’s decision to kill French prisoners of war during the battle of Agincourt (*Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 17-19), the question of whether soldiers or only their leaders are responsible for war crimes (*Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 39), and the fact that aggression leads to the hellishness that is war (*Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 52). *Just and Unjust Wars* also cites Troilus and Cressida (p. 120) and King John (p. 296). Given all these citations, it surprises me somewhat that, in *Regicide and Revolution*, Walzer does not quote Camillo’s claim in *The Winter’s Tale* that nobody who has killed a king has ever flourished thereafter or find evidence for such a claim in the stories of either Julius Caesar or Macbeth.

²⁰⁵ Walzer, “Political Action” pp. 279, 291-293.

²⁰⁶ Translated by W. H. Auden and C. Kallman (Boston, 1976).

²⁰⁷ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, pp. 18-19. The poem is called “Song of the Broad-Axe”.

²⁰⁸ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. xxvii.

²⁰⁹ Princeton, 1970.

²¹⁰ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 116-117 and 343.

²¹¹ Walzer, “Political Action” p. 293. The references to the other authors cited can be easily located in the notes to the article on pp. 293-295.

²¹² Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. xx.

²¹³ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. v.

²¹⁴ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. iii.

²¹⁵ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. xxvii.

²¹⁶ Examples of these include the discussion of the Nuremberg war crimes tribunal (pp. 289-296), the account of the Roman siege of Jerusalem in 72 A.D. (pp. 161-165) and the defense of Israel's pre-emptive strike that launched the Six Day War of 1967 (pp. 80-85).

²¹⁷ Except, of course, for those of *Obligations* and *Political Action*, which were covered in the previous chapter.

²¹⁸ B. Orend, *Michael Walzer on War and Justice*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000) p. 2. Orend states that, in his view, "Walzer's war theory leads him into fuller, and more profound, consideration of the fundamental issues of applied political philosophy than does his work on distribution." However, he also gives as a reason for the focus on *Just and Unjust Wars* the fact that more attention has been devoted to Walzer's distributive theory. As he points out, M. Walzer and D. Miller, *Pluralism, Justice and Equality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) is devoted in its entirety to a critique of *Spheres of Justice*, while there is no book-length treatment of *Just and Unjust Wars*. I would counter that the number of journal articles on *Just and Unjust Wars* may well be larger and that, because it has been widely read in international relations as well as in political theory, its audience may well be larger, even if not the analysis of it. Furthermore, *Just and Unjust Wars* has sold more copies than all of Walzer's other books combined.

²¹⁹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 15.

²²⁰ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 288. This claim is in part five of the book.

²²¹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. xix. C.f. the preface to *Political Action*.

²²² Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. xix.

²²³ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. xix.

²²⁴ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. xx. On analytic philosophy, Walzer writes, "We suffered from an education which taught us that [ethical terms] had no proper descriptive use and no objective meaning. Moral discourse was excluded from the world of science, even of social science. It expressed feelings, not perceptions, and there was no reason for the expression of feelings to be precise... any precision it achieved had an entirely subjective reference: it was the domain of the poet and the literary critic." Walzer responds to this view at length in the book, notably in the argument that moral theory is a matter of evoking commonly held principles persuasively. In any case, by 1977 such a view was, as Walzer recognizes, less widely held than it had been two decades before. Now he probably laments its resurgence even in post-analytic discourse.

²²⁵ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. xx.

²²⁶ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. xxi.

²²⁷ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. xxi. The appearance of overlap – based on linguistic similarity – is, says Walzer, greater than the substantive similarity based on argument. Hence he feels the need to explain that unless he offers a disclaimer – such as when talking about "positive" law – the terms he uses, such as aggression and neutrality, are moral ones (pp. xxii).

²²⁸ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. xxii.

²²⁹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. xxiii. Despite this disclaimer, Walzer insists that the skeptical question – "What is this morality of yours?" – is more radical than the skeptic may think because "it excludes him not only from the comfortable world of moral agreement, but also from the wider world of agreement and disagreement, justification and criticism." Skeptics cannot consistently also be critics: we share a moral world not because we agree but "because we acknowledge the same difficulties on the way to our conclusions... It's not easy to opt out, and only the wicked and the simple make the attempt." Non-Jewish readers may not realize that this passage is drawn very closely from the Passover service and, in particular, from the section of that service that discusses the questions asked to their father by four sons – one wise, one wicked, one simple, and one who is too young to ask any question. The wicked son's question is, "What is this festival of yours?" and the response to him is that, by asking the question, he

has excluded himself from the community. This passage is, then, one of the strongest pieces of evidence that Walzer's views on the just war are both motivated and influenced by his Judaism.

²³⁰ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. xxiii.

²³¹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. xxiii.

²³² Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. xxiii. According to Walzer, "The exposure of hypocrisy is certainly the most ordinary, and it may also be the most important form of moral criticism. We are rarely called upon to invent new ethical principles; if we did that, our criticism would not be comprehensible to the people whose behavior we wanted to condemn. Rather, we hold such people to their own principles, though we may draw these out and arrange them in ways they had not thought of before." This argument foreshadows in important ways the thesis of *Interpretation and Social Criticism* about the appropriate path in moral theory being neither invention nor discovery, but interpretation.

²³³ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. xxiv. In *Spheres of Justice*, Walzer follows John Stuart Mill in seeking to dispense with rights' claims, but he acknowledges the discrepancy.

²³⁴ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. xxiv.

²³⁵ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. xxiv. At the conclusion of the preface, Walzer says that the central tension in the theory of war – the dilemma about whether to win or to fight well, which shall be discussed below – is "the military form of the means/ends problem, the central issue in political ethics." This helps to explain my argument below that the argument about dirty hands in "Political Action" is the general case of which the "supreme emergency" and "public regicide" are particular examples. These points are discussed later in the chapter. It also explains why Walzer thought that the question of the moral dilemma was more significant a topic than the rules of war.

²³⁶ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 3.

²³⁷ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 4-8. The argument is summed up thus: "one could no more criticize the Athenians for their wartime policies than one could criticize a stone for falling downward" (p7).

²³⁸ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 8. In the Athenian senate, the policy could not have been said to be inevitable but merely indispensable (for the defense of the empire), but, as Walzer points out, that assumes that it was necessary for Athens to preserve its empire and assumes that the expectations of the generals must be correct.

²³⁹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 13-16. According to Walzer, strategic arguments, like moral ones, are both normative and descriptive. Strategists argue about which action to pursue, making strategy, like morality, "a language of justification." They also explain what actually happened in ways that other participants can understand. Furthermore, in both cases it is "only when their substantive content is fairly clear that... terms can be used imperatively."

²⁴⁰ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 16. Walzer also argues that studying the actions of our predecessors makes sense only on the assumption that they saw the world as we do.

²⁴¹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 17-19. Walzer considers the accounts of Henry's action offered by Holinshed, Shakespeare and Hume, noting that for the "traditional chronicler, Renaissance playwright, and Enlightenment historian – and for us too, Henry's command belongs to a category of military acts that requires scrutiny and judgment."

²⁴² Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 20.

²⁴³ In brief, the argument of chapter 2 is that aggressive war is unjustified because of the potentially unlimited nature of the destruction that war might wreak. Although Walzer objects to the arguments of such figures as Clausewitz and Sherman that "war is hell" and the only decision worthy of note is whether to wage it or not, he accepts their insight that the destructiveness of war makes the decision to wage it extremely important and rules out any non-defensive war. In chapter 3, Walzer insists upon the moral equality of soldiers and uses it to make the case for restraint within the fighting of war. He cites the example of Erwin Rommel, widely considered a general who fought a bad war well, to demonstrate that participants in aggressive wars are not necessarily to be blamed for the war and that their behavior is therefore a matter subject to moral evaluation (pp. 37-39). Having established the equality of combatants, Walzer goes on to insist on non-combatant immunity, which is his chief concern in the book. Indeed, "the

morality of war would not be radically transformed were [rules specifying how and when soldiers can be killed] to be abolished altogether” (p. 42). On the other hand, if certain groups of people were not seen as illegitimate targets, then it would not make sense to think of war as a moral enterprise. For this reason, soldiers who surrender must not be killed. They may try to escape but not to kill anyone in making the attempt. It would be murder to do so.

²⁴⁴ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 51. Emphasis added.

²⁴⁵ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 53.

²⁴⁶ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 54. I take up this theme again in discussing “The Moral Standing of States.”

²⁴⁷ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 58.

²⁴⁸ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 59.

²⁴⁹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 59-60. The most important example of such a war would be one between imperialist powers. Chivalric wars between aristocrats are another example.

²⁵⁰ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 61-63.

²⁵¹ It may not be entirely clear why conclusion 5 is drawn. Walzer explains that its purpose is to limit the opportunities for war to break out, which is of course a vital aim of just war theory. Unless a wrong has been received – or is clearly about to be received – a war is unjust; hence, in a society of just states, there will be no wars.

²⁵² In this chapter, Walzer also considers the case for appeasement through the examples of the Munich Agreement and the Soviet invasion of Finland. His argument is that even where appeasement is necessary, it is regrettably so because it involves a “failure to resist evil” (p. 69) and an acceptance of rights’ violations. As the theory of aggression “presupposes our commitment to a pluralist world” resistance helps to maintain our commitments in a way that appeasement does not. We want, Walzer says, “to live in an international society where communities of men and women freely shape their separate destinies” (p. 72). As always in Walzer, the right to collective self-determination is one of the most important rights that can be defended.

²⁵³ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 85.

²⁵⁴ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 52.

²⁵⁵ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 84-85. For the claim that provocations are insufficient to justify pre-emption see pp. 80-81.

²⁵⁶ The example that Walzer considers is that of the Spanish War of Succession in the early 18th century, which he takes to be a war waged to maintain the balance of power. As balance of power theory relies on the assumption that neighboring states have malign intent without any specific evidence to support the fear, Walzer argues that it is not “prudent” but “merely cynical” (p. 78).

²⁵⁷ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 93.

²⁵⁸ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 87.

²⁵⁹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 88.

²⁶⁰ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 97.

²⁶¹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 100. For this reason, Walzer argues that the US involvement in Vietnam would not have been justified as a counter-intervention even if the cause were just, because the scale of the counter-intervention was too great.

²⁶² Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 101. Nonetheless, Walzer was criticized for being too reluctant to allow humanitarian intervention, as seen in the discussion of “The Moral Standing of States”.

²⁶³ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 107.

²⁶⁴ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 113-114.

²⁶⁵ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 113. Again, such a policy was in Walzer’s view not justified with regard to Japan, which he sees as a containable militaristic regime.

²⁶⁶ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 117.

²⁶⁷ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 115.

²⁶⁸ For similar reasons, Walzer argues that any attack on North Korea during the Korean War would have been a “war of conquest and reconstruction” (p. 120) and hence unjustified. Both the rights of the North Koreans and of the American soldiers would have been violated in such a case.

²⁶⁹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 121.

²⁷⁰ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 127.

²⁷¹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 128-129.

²⁷² Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 130.

²⁷³ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 131-133.

²⁷⁴ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 132. Walzer follows Kant in stressing the importance of this point.

²⁷⁵ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 135.

²⁷⁶ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 138.

²⁷⁷ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 138. It means, in essence, that young, adult, working-class men are considered acceptable targets in ways that children, the elderly, women and the privileged are not.

²⁷⁸ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 138-142.

²⁷⁹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 142.

²⁸⁰ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 144.

²⁸¹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 146.

²⁸² Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 151-152.

²⁸³ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 153. Four conditions must first be applied: 1) that the act is a legitimate act in itself; 2) that the “direct effect” is legitimate (such as destroying enemy supplies); 3) the actor’s intention is simply to achieve the legitimate goal; 4) the war aim is sufficiently important to compensate for the “evil” effect (i.e. it is proportionate).

²⁸⁴ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 155-156.

²⁸⁵ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 162.

²⁸⁶ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 168-170. This is important because the siege of Leningrad caused more civilian deaths than did the bombings of Hamburg, Dresden, Tokyo, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki put together (p. 160). The inhabitants must be permitted to leave because “though they have freely chosen to live within [the city] walls, [they] have not chosen to live under siege. The siege itself is an act of coercion... and I cannot see how the commander of the besieging army can escape responsibility for its effects. He has no right to wage total war” (p. 168).

²⁸⁷ Considering the British naval blockade on Germany in World War I, Walzer argues that this principle can be extended to the national level. He claims that naval blockades are illegitimate acts of war because civilians will be made to suffer before soldiers are, whereas the laws of war require that soldiers take “careful aim at military target[s] and away from nonmilitary” ones (p. 174).

²⁸⁸ The case Walzer considers is that of a platoon of German soldiers who were killed by French resistance fighters disguised as peasants. As France had surrendered, the German soldiers were not ready to fight and were taken by surprise. (pp. 176-177). Walzer argues that both resistance such as that shown by the French and punishment of resistance are legitimate because the patriotic desire to defend one’s country may continue after the war is officially over but no army must allow itself to be subjected to surprise attacks without having the right to punish the ambushers.

²⁸⁹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 179.

²⁹⁰ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 180. In fact, as Walzer points out, only a small part of the population will really be mobilized and the guerillas will depend on enemy attacks on them to mobilize the rest.

²⁹¹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 185.

²⁹² Walzer’s argument about guerilla warfare thus reflects his thoughts on anti-colonial and national liberation struggles. In each case, the key question is whether the pluralist world order could potentially be enhanced by the success of the cause.

²⁹³ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 186.

²⁹⁴ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 187. The “anti-guerrilla war can then no longer be fought – and not just because, from a strategic point of view, it can no longer be won. It cannot be fought because it is no

longer an anti-guerrilla war but an anti-social war, a war against an entire people, in which no distinctions would be possible in the actual fighting.”

²⁹⁵ The critique of the “American ‘Rules of Engagement’ in Vietnam” is on pp. 188-196. Walzer argues that the US was unjustified in bombing or shelling villages from which it had received enemy fire or known to be hostile, even if it announced that it would do so in advance. This is partly because the announcements were unlikely to be understood, but also because it in effect called for mass exodus. Furthermore, the villagers were being asked the impossible, as they could not possibly expel the guerrillas in their midst. Finally, the attacks were disproportionate. Although the US thus appeared to recognize the combatant/non-combatant distinction, in “fact, they set up a new distinction: between loyal and disloyal, or friendly and hostile noncombatants” (p. 193).

²⁹⁶ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 125-126.

²⁹⁷ It is, he says, important to remember that governments as well as “radical movements” may engage in acts of war aimed to induce terror in the opposing camp (p. 197).

²⁹⁸ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 198. Walzer here inverts Clausewitz’s famous maxim.

²⁹⁹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 198. Of the examples he uses, it is important to note the one from Camus’s “The Just Assassins” because that is a play Walzer also uses in his argument in “Political Action”. In the example, a Russian revolutionary was going to assassinate Grand Duke Sergei, a Tsarist official, but walked away because the victim was holding two children in his lap. One of his comrades applauds his decision, saying, “Even in destruction, there’s a right way and a wrong way” (p. 199).

³⁰⁰ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 200-201. What is of broader relevance about the previous quote is that Walzer accepts a distinction between fact and value. Given what he has to say elsewhere about the nature of moral reasoning, this is slightly surprising.

³⁰¹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 203.

³⁰² Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 204.

³⁰³ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 205.

³⁰⁴ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 205-206. A reference, of course, to Kant.

³⁰⁵ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 207.

³⁰⁶ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 209-210.

³⁰⁷ Walzer cites an instance in World War II when Germany executed 80 French partisans on the grounds that France had signed an armistice in 1940, and in return the French resistance forces executed 80 German prisoners (p. 208).

³⁰⁸ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 212.

³⁰⁹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 215. However, he does accept that the reprisal is a less serious offense than the original breach of the convention. For example, he argues that the French are less guilty than the Germans because they violated the rules “for the declared purpose of re-establishing” them.

³¹⁰ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 215-216. Walzer condones peacetime reprisals such as Israel’s raid on Beirut in 1968 in response to an attack on the Israeli national airline carried out by terrorists holding Lebanese passports. (He does not, on the other hand, condone Israel’s 1953 attack on the Jordanian village of Khibye, because it was not proportionate). This is because, “Soldiers engaged in a reprisal raid will cross over an international boundary, but they will quickly cross back; they will act destructively, but only up to a point; they will violate sovereignty, but they will also respect it. And finally, they will attend to the rights of innocent people.” (p. 221).

³¹¹ Walzer actually starts the section with a critique of Mao’s view that the laws of war are a case of “asinine ethics.” This seems to me to be more or less akin to the objection to the realist position expressed by Thucydides in the Melian Dialogue. The difference, I suppose, is that Thucydides is discussing particular campaigns within a war, and Mao is discussing the approach to particular battles. Mao derides the principles of *jus in bello*, Thucydides’ critique blurs the line between *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. Another distinction is that Mao’s position may be compatible with an approach that sees the laws of war as useful “rules of thumb” that should be observed in general but not if doing so conflicts with military requirements (p. 227).

³¹² Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 229. Rawls is cited as an exponent of this view.

³¹³ In practice, however, is it not rather unlikely that soldiers engaged in an unjust war will be allowed by their commanders to fight in a more restrained way than soldiers engaged in a just war?

³¹⁴ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 230. As Walzer says, "It is not so much a resolution of the tension between winning and fighting well as a denial of its moral significance."

³¹⁵ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 231.

³¹⁶ The same is not true for the other two alternative positions that he considers: that the war convention must give way to utilitarian concerns (i.e. the 'asinine ethics' view); and that the convention holds regardless of the consequences (an absolutist position). Given that the notion of dirty hands is intended to refute "absolutism," here is evidence that the supreme emergency is seen as an instance of a dirty hands dilemma (pp. 231-232).

³¹⁷ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars* p. 232.

³¹⁸ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 233.

³¹⁹ This is especially so because, as Walzer points out, in international law, neutral parties have a duty not to discriminate in any way whatsoever. Neutrality does not just involve abstention from fighting. However, the rule applies only at the level of the state: individual citizens may campaign politically or choose to fight for whichever side they see fit (p. 235).

³²⁰ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 236.

³²¹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 236. Of course, someone who gets involved in breaking up a street brawl may also be killed, but she is making the decision for herself, whereas the soldier is obeying the orders of someone very remote from him.

³²² Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 238.

³²³ Walzer takes the question of the state's obligation to give up its neutral status to be importantly different from the right of parties to the war to violate the neutrality of other states. The violation of neutrality is in ordinary circumstances a crime, but when it occurs so as to defeat aggression or secure international peace, it gets to the heart of the tension between winning a war and fighting that war well. Nonetheless, Walzer insists that it can be just to violate neutral rights only in a supreme emergency and that even then extreme care must be taken. As a result, he argues not only that the German attack on Belgium in 1914 was unjust, but also that the British decision to mine neutral Norway's waters in 1940 so as to cut off the German iron ore supply was morally wrong. In the first instance, the German claim that the invasion was militarily necessary mistakes the indispensability of the attack so as to secure certain aims (in this case a quick victory on the western front) with its inevitability, because the aim of a quick victory was not an inevitable one, but rather one that involved sacrificing Belgian lives for the sake of German ones (pp. 240-242). In the latter case, Walzer argues that Britain violated Norway's neutrality – by mining the waters – as a first resort, when such violations are legitimate only as last resorts. In part, the violation was the result of Churchill's refusal to accept the Norwegian's right to remain neutral against Nazi Germany (pp. 242-250).

³²⁴ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 251.

³²⁵ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 252. As Walzer notes, states tend to call a situation a supreme emergency solely because a threat is imminent, without considering whether it is catastrophic.

³²⁶ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 252. As Walzer points out, some people do not think that they are justified to kill someone else to save their own life.

³²⁷ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 253.

³²⁸ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 253.

³²⁹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 254. He would endorse the decision because statesmen "might sacrifice themselves... to uphold the moral law, but they cannot sacrifice their countrymen. Faced with some ultimate horror, their options exhausted, they will do what they must to save their own people."

³³⁰ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 254. However, that would mean that larger nations would be more entitled to break the moral law for reasons of self-preservation, and Walzer is not happy with that position. He concludes that, "it is possible to live in a world where individuals are sometimes murdered,

but a world where entire people are enslaved or massacred is literally unbearable. For the survival and freedom of political communities – whose members share a way of life, developed by their ancestors, to be passed on to their children – are the highest values of international society. Nazism challenged these values on a grand scale, but challenges more narrowly conceived, if they are of the same kind, have similar moral consequences. They bring us under the rule of necessity (and necessity knows no rules).” Italicization in the original, bold emphasis added.

³³¹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 259.

³³² Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 261. The quote is from Churchill.

³³³ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 261. The point being that city bombings would end the war sooner, so the Allies decided to sacrifice the lives of German civilians for the sake of Allied soldiers, an unjustified infringement of the laws of war.

³³⁴ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 262.

³³⁵ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 263.

³³⁶ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 264.

³³⁷ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 264-266.

³³⁸ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 266. As Walzer notes, had the US not insisted on the unconditional surrender of the Japanese, the war could have been ended without either the bombing or an attack on mainland Japan.

³³⁹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 267. This is made manifest by the fact that the calculations as to how many casualties there would be compare the number of deaths inflicted by the bombing with the number of deaths that would have been inflicted by a continuation of the incendiary bombing campaign. Walzer concludes that, “Our purpose...was not to avert a ‘butchery’ that someone else was threatening, but one that we were threatening.”

³⁴⁰ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 268.

³⁴¹ Walzer goes on to argue that the nuclear threat is an immoral one because it threatens to target civilians in far greater numbers than has ever before been countenanced (p. 269). However, he also notes that so long as other countries have nuclear capabilities, “Supreme emergency [will be] a permanent condition. Deterrence is a way of coping with that condition, and though it is a bad way, there may well be no other that is practical in a world of sovereign and suspicious states. We threaten evil in order not to do it, and the doing of it would be so terrible that the threat seems in comparison to be morally defensible” (p. 274). It is worth noting that this argument demonstrates that Walzer does not totally reject the realist position – he sees states as being suspicious. However, he goes on to claim that, “we are under an obligation to seize upon opportunities of escape, even to take risks for the sake of such opportunities...the readiness to murder is balanced, or should be, by the readiness not to murder...as soon as alternative ways to peace can be found” (p. 283).

³⁴² It is, he says, important to assign responsibility because the notion of there being war crimes is useless if there are not identifiable war criminals (p. 287).

³⁴³ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 288.

³⁴⁴ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 291.

³⁴⁵ For this reason, Walzer argues that German diplomats such as Ernst von Weizsaecker, who was acquitted on review of the charge of crimes against the peace on the grounds that he objected to the war, should have been deemed war criminals if they did not either resign from their positions or seek to combat it from within. The latter, however, he views as beyond the call of duty given the dangers and “personal agony” likely to ensue (pp. 292-295).

³⁴⁶ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 296.

³⁴⁷ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 298.

³⁴⁸ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 300.

³⁴⁹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 302.

³⁵⁰ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 302. Sadly, Walzer reflects, those who are likely to feel the “real moral burden” are those most active in campaigning against it (p. 303).

³⁵¹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 306-307.

³⁵² Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 305.

³⁵³ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 309. To be precise, Walzer argues that each soldier who shoots prisoners trying to surrender bears full responsibility for the act, unless there are extenuating circumstances. On the other hand, the acts of those who obey orders are seen as “not entirely their own,” which is why responsibility for such crimes is diminished (but not totally eradicated).

³⁵⁴ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 309.

³⁵⁵ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 311. He also emphasizes that soldiers should have been instructed during training to disobey illegal orders.

³⁵⁶ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 312-313. “The soldiers in the Vietnamese village could hardly have doubted the innocence of the people they were ordered to kill. It is in such a situation that we want them to disobey: when they receive orders which...’ a man of ordinary sense and understanding would, under the circumstances, know to be unlawful.”

³⁵⁷ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 313-314. However, the threat of demotion would not be a legitimate excuse for committing murder (p. 315). Walzer also adds that disobeying orders is a difficult thing to do alone and that soldiers who disobey cannot be assured that other soldiers would back them up and may fear isolation. That does not justify committing war crimes, but it does suggest, “that moral life is rooted in a kind of association that military discipline precludes” (p. 316).

³⁵⁸ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 317.

³⁵⁹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 323.

³⁶⁰ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 323-325.

³⁶¹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 325.

³⁶² Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 333.

³⁶³ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 334-335.

³⁶⁴ Walzer lists the sources for each article on pp. 301-303. “The New Left and the Old,” pp. 109-127, is based on two different lectures, one given at York University in 1967 and one at Harvard University in 1968/9.

³⁶⁵ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 3.

³⁶⁶ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 302.

³⁶⁷ Walzer touches on this point in both “Civility and Civic Virtue in Contemporary America” (pp. 54-72) and “Nervous Liberals” (pp. 92-106).

³⁶⁸ Whether it is possible for everyone to fall within the scope of the welfare state, and whether that would solve the challenges facing the system, is the subject of “Dissatisfaction in the Welfare State” (pp. 23-53).

³⁶⁹ However, as Walzer notes of “A Theory of Revolution” (pp. 201-203), the most theoretical essay in the collection, “the theoretical analysis [is] little more than a prolegomena to a defense of democracy.” (p. 4). The essays on Social Change are also “political essays” (p. 4).

³⁷⁰ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 223.

³⁷¹ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 10.

³⁷² My analysis is, of course, meant to be rough and ready rather than definitive of Walzer’s project. Given what I argued above, it would seem curious that “In Defense of Equality” is in part four of *Radical Principles* rather than in part three.

³⁷³ In Mahagonny, according to Walzer, all prohibitions have been abolished, resulting in a “promiscuous use of people and things.” (p. 8).

³⁷⁴ The phrases quoted in the last two sentences are from pp. 17-18 of *Radical Principles*. It should be noted that Walzer deliberately says that he is trying to draw a picture of the great city and not to “give a theoretical account” of how to achieve it.

³⁷⁵ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, pp. 18-19. I have extracted from the Whitman poem those elements that Walzer is most firmly committed to in the book.

³⁷⁶ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 19.

³⁷⁷ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 11.

³⁷⁸ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 9. “Dissatisfaction in the Welfare State” takes up this question in great detail.

³⁷⁹ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 4. It is important to note, however, that Walzer does state that the theory of class conflict “has always seemed to me the most persuasive.”

³⁸⁰ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, pp. 4-5.

³⁸¹ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, pp. 5-6.

³⁸² Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 17.

³⁸³ In the introduction to the revised edition of *A Theory of Justice*, John Rawls – a self-declared liberal – also argues that the welfare state is not in accordance with his theory of justice because it consists of a continued set of transfer payments and leaves many people in a state of dependence. As a result, he prefers either a “property-owning democracy” or “liberal socialism.” Walzer’s critique of liberalism may not, therefore, apply to the theoretical liberalism of contemporary philosophy, but only to the liberalism of contemporary USA. I cannot take up this point in any detail here. On Rawls, see *A Theory of Justice*, pp. xiv-xv.

³⁸⁴ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 24.

³⁸⁵ It is 31 pages long. The next longest is the 23-page “A Theory of Revolution”.

³⁸⁶ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 23.

³⁸⁷ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 25.

³⁸⁸ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 31. The last two might not seem like obviously beneficial effects of the welfare state but Walzer insists that they are “not only compatible with classical liberal theory, but actually represent its fulfillment.”

³⁸⁹ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 35. Administrative tyranny is characterized by the power of administrators over those who receive benefits and by an increase in social control as citizens become better known to the authorities. (pp. 32-33).

³⁹⁰ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 37.

³⁹¹ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 37.

³⁹² Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 39.

³⁹³ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 40.

³⁹⁴ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 41.

³⁹⁵ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 41. C.f. J. S. Mill, *Autobiography*, (London: Penguin, 1989) [1873], p. 112.

³⁹⁶ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 43.

³⁹⁷ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 46.

³⁹⁸ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, pp. 46-47.

³⁹⁹ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 49.

⁴⁰⁰ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 50.

⁴⁰¹ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 52. In a postscript to “Dissatisfaction in the Welfare State” written for the publication of *Radical Principles* in 1980, Walzer addresses the argument of Habermas that capitalist societies face a “legitimation crisis” and argues that it is greatly exaggerated.

⁴⁰² Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 73.

⁴⁰³ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 74.

⁴⁰⁴ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 76.

⁴⁰⁵ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 77.

⁴⁰⁶ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 81.

⁴⁰⁷ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 85.

⁴⁰⁸ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 86.

⁴⁰⁹ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 90.

⁴¹⁰ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 87.

⁴¹¹ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 90.

⁴¹² Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 92.

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- ⁴¹³ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, pp. 93-94.
- ⁴¹⁴ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 101.
- ⁴¹⁵ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 109. “Nervous Liberals” is a review of Peter Steinfels’ book *The Neo-Conservatives: The Men Who Are Changing America’s Politics* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979), which itself discusses the work of such figures as Daniel Bell, Irving Kristol and S. M. Lipset.
- ⁴¹⁶ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, pp. 54-55.
- ⁴¹⁷ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, pp. 55-56.
- ⁴¹⁸ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 57.
- ⁴¹⁹ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 59. According to Walzer, Americans are more civil than were their 19th century predecessors, as they are more likely to obey the law and less likely to riot.
- ⁴²⁰ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 62. The main problem concerning this principle is that Americans seem to find it harder to tolerate “sexual deviance and countercultural life-styles” than racial, religious or political differences. (p. 63).
- ⁴²¹ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 64.
- ⁴²² Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 67. That is because they “encourage people to view their interests as fragmented, diverse, and private; they make for quiet and passive citizen, unwilling...to subject themselves to the discipline of a creed or party.”
- ⁴²³ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 68.
- ⁴²⁴ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 70.
- ⁴²⁵ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, pp. 70-71.
- ⁴²⁶ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 72.
- ⁴²⁷ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 109.
- ⁴²⁸ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, pp. 112-113. On Walzer’s analysis, there are five stages through which most political activist movements pass, and the goal of the New Left is to avoid moving to the fifth stage, that of demobilization, in which activists are replaced by “competent bureaucrats” (p. 116). [The stages are: 1) “passivity – sporadic violence”, a stage in which oppression is endured; 2) “early mobilization – demonstrations, riots – sectarian activity”, during which time group consciousness begins to develop but when it is suppressed leaves behind little organizational apparatus; 3) “high mobilization – political parties and machines, trade unions”, when “genuinely” representative bodies – with mass membership – emerge and challenge the elites of the political or economic system; 4) “partial success – accommodation”, when many of the oppressed break into the affluent world and win certain bargaining power without changing the structure of the system in any fundamental way; 5) “demobilization – bureaucracy”. (pp. 115-116). The New Leftists were keen to avoid stage 5 because they are the products of it and “think they know, and even more they feel, how awful it is”. Yet the position of the young radical is necessarily “ambivalent and painful” because there is seemingly no place for the poor to escape to other than a section of middle-class US life. (p. 117). This is another of the basic difficulties facing the New Left.
- ⁴²⁹ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 121.
- ⁴³⁰ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 127.
- ⁴³¹ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 140.
- ⁴³² Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 141.
- ⁴³³ These questions are listed on pp. 143-144 and include such matters as whether the police should be national or local, when policemen should be called onto university campuses or sent to quell riots and demonstrators, and whether anyone really thinks of policemen as being “pigs”.
- ⁴³⁴ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, pp. 145-150.
- ⁴³⁵ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 155.
- ⁴³⁶ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 156.
- ⁴³⁷ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 161.

⁴³⁸ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 163. Walzer goes on to state that it is easy to sympathize with the motives of those “black militants” who seized control but argues that the result of this rupture was “disastrous for the Left...politically, intellectually and morally.”

⁴³⁹ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 167.

⁴⁴⁰ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, pp. 171-172.

⁴⁴¹ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 173.

⁴⁴² Walzer, *Radical Principles* p. 174.

⁴⁴³ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 183. However, in this case Walzer says comments on the positive affects of advocacy. Noting that the critique is precisely the neoconservative complaint about the welfare state, he says that, “clients are at least men and women for whom someone speaks. The greater danger today is to be unspoken for.”

⁴⁴⁴ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 185.

⁴⁴⁵ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, pp. 189-190.

⁴⁴⁶ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, pp. 190-191. This is because modernization theorists write as though progress has been realized and “wait for their straining, backward fellows, as if they had no more history of their own to act out.” Their theory “rests on the idea of a single revolution” (in contradistinction to the Marxist notion of two revolutions) enacting the transition from traditional to modern. As no country has yet gone through two revolutions, Walzer thinks that the idea is not without “empirical justification” as Marxists have had difficulty explaining why “proletarian” revolutions have always occurred in countries that have not been through a “bourgeois” revolution. Likewise, he has sympathy for the claim of modernization theorists that capitalism and socialism (whether Bolshevik or social democratic) are in important ways similar social systems and claims that “Socialists...have nowhere produced societies conforming to their own aspirations” (p. 194). However, Walzer insists that the “decisive advantage” of the Marxist theorist is in her ability to seek out “contradictions” in her own society, which a modernization theorist cannot do because he studies pre-modern or transitional societies and does not see that “the structure of modernity, like any other social structure, may become an impediment to further progressive transformations” (p. 195).

⁴⁴⁷ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 195. Emphasis in the original.

⁴⁴⁸ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 196. Walzer also says that the “Russian people thus are likely to endure their modernizing party as an inescapable incubus for years to come, long after its presumed historical function has been fulfilled. Soviet modernity does not depend first upon the activity of the party and then upon its withering away. Instead, the party creates a particular form of modernity.”

⁴⁴⁹ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 198.

⁴⁵⁰ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 200.

⁴⁵¹ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 225.

⁴⁵² Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 225.

⁴⁵³ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, pp. 226-228.

⁴⁵⁴ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 230.

⁴⁵⁵ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 233.

⁴⁵⁶ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 202. A similar point is made in “The Day in the Life of a Socialist Citizen” with reference to Marx’s sketch of socialist life in *The German Ideology*.

⁴⁵⁷ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 202. Walzer cites as possible revolutionary goals a “holy commonwealth, “a republic of virtue”, and “a communist society.” His discussion is thus not limited to the debate within socialism and he focuses on the English and French revolutions, as well as on the Russian and Chinese ones. “A Theory of Revolution” is thus a continuation of Walzer’s interest in English Puritanism, as well as in socialism and reiterates themes discussed in both *The Revolution of the Saints* and *Regicide and Revolution*.

⁴⁵⁸ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 203. C.f. V. I. Lenin, *What is to Be Done?* (Peking, 1975). Walzer argues that the composition of the vanguard depends on the education of the members of the

revolutionary class and that, for that reason, many more Puritan clerics were drawn from the “lesser gentry” than were Chinese Communists drawn from the “poorer peasants”.

⁴⁵⁹ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, pp. 203-204.

⁴⁶⁰ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 205.

⁴⁶¹ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 206.

⁴⁶² As a result, much of the remainder of “A Theory of Revolution” considers the history of the vanguard/revolutionary class relationship. Walzer argues that the Puritan ministers held a strong position over the lay group because clerics are able to claim “special knowledge” and have a “considerable capacity for collective discipline” (pp. 206-207). Furthermore, they had the experience of 100 years of organizational experimentation behind them. In France, on the other hand, intellectual organization was “rudimentary” and so the revolutionary radicals had to innovate and Jacobin clubs were only “a first approximation to the party cells that facilitated later vanguard activity” (p. 207). In both Russia and China, the vanguard had considerable independence, because of its contact with “poorly educated and unorganized social classes” (p. 208). Walzer concludes that industrial proletariats will be more resistant to vanguard domination than will other social groups because they have previous organization and that vanguards will dominate at times when an older ruling class can no longer dominate but the revolutionary class is not yet sufficiently coherent. For these reasons, modern radicals have often sought out peasant followers. (p. 209)

⁴⁶³ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 211. Walzer means that the structure is similar even if the content is different.

⁴⁶⁴ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 212. Although that zeal may be puritanical, activist or egalitarian, each is related through its commitment to “self-control” and “discipline” on the part of the revolutionary class. (pp. 212-217).

⁴⁶⁵ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 216.

⁴⁶⁶ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 217.

⁴⁶⁷ Walzer considers the possibility of “an absconding vanguard” akin to Machiavelli’s lawgiving prince who, like Numa Pompilius, establishes a republic and then leaves it to the control of the many (p. 219). A final possibility is that the vanguard leads the revolution and is then slowly replaced by the revolutionary class, which absorbs the vanguard’s members into their ancestors’ social roles. Despite such possibilities, Walzer thinks it important to at least try to imagine a revolution without a vanguard, because the “absconding vanguard... belongs to the realm of political mythology, for it would require an almost saintly self-effacement” (p. 220).

⁴⁶⁸ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 220.

⁴⁶⁹ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 220.

⁴⁷⁰ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 221. So, the revolution, although “including moments of tumult and upheaval” will not “culminate in anything like a one-stroke seizure of power.” It will result in a reshaping of everyday work and the ownership of the means of production, however.

⁴⁷¹ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 223. Walzer insists that bureaucratic government must become less sustainable as the education of the working classes improves.

⁴⁷² Walzer, *Radical Principles*, pp. 257-258. This is not according to Walzer simply a question of race or social class but also of religion, ethnicity, ideology and so on.

⁴⁷³ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 259. The five principles are: 1) neighborhood; 2) parental interest/ideology; 3) talent; 4) equal treatment; 5) nationalism. (pp. 260-270).

⁴⁷⁴ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 272. The major difficulties that arise from a principle of educational association based on neighborhood seem to arise from the lack of freedom and equality in American life. Hence Walzer notes that the principle “works best for those who live in cohesive and relatively prosperous neighborhoods,” which would one assumes mean any neighborhood in a democratic socialist state. (p. 261). Therefore, the fact that children and parents probably flourish the most in schools that they support and whose character they understand is for Walzer decisive.

⁴⁷⁵ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 273.

⁴⁷⁶ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 274.

⁴⁷⁷ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 274. Direct subjugation is akin to the relationship between master and slave or servant, as in the ancien regime, and is marked by modes of speech and behavior that imply humility or deference. Indirect subjugation, which is harder to recognize, relates to often invisible systems of relationship whereby a person can make decisions that affect the welfare of others without asking for their agreement and are the person's to make because of her position in a particular structure of authority where the person subject to the power is not the source of the authority that the person with the power has over him. So, subjects to an absolute monarch are both directly and indirectly subjugated, as they must both obey and live with the decisions of the monarch.

⁴⁷⁸ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 275.

⁴⁷⁹ This is, presumably, what Walzer sees as separating socialists from liberals. For he argues that socialists say that neither direct nor indirect subjugation is abolished through the establishment of democracy. Liberals would presumably say that the former was abolished in a democracy, even if they accepted Walzer's point about the continued existence of indirect subjugation. Walzer states that the reason why democracy has not abolished either form of subjugation is that we are involved in common enterprises other than that of the state, as the "capitalist economy proliferates what are plausibly called private governments. Within capitalist organizations a process of decision making can be marked out, dominated by officials, which has the crucial characteristics of a political regime. The process has outcomes that seriously affects thousands and hundreds of thousands of people, including men and women...who are in some sense its members." These participants are subjects to authority that they have not authorized, but that emerges through the private property system. Hence socialists claim that this is not a justified form of authority. As Walzer notes, many democrats disagree with this claim, and liberal democrats are presumably foremost among them. (pp. 276-277).

⁴⁸⁰ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 278.

⁴⁸¹ To demonstrate this point, Walzer uses an extended parable in which a young man founds a town and then tries to claim possession over it so as to block the political rights of the inhabitants (elections and so on). The citizens revolt and say that the founder of the town does not have the right to make whatever decisions he sees fit, that he is "entitled to honor and glory but not to obedience" (p. 283). He is the town's founder but not its owner. The man is forced to allow town elections and meetings. A few years later, the man's son, who is the owner of the river haulage company that is the source of most of the town's jobs and economic prosperity, refuses to allow the town council to take over the company saying that he is the owner of the company and can do with it as he pleases. The town council insist that all he is entitled to is remuneration for his father's investment but not to make all decisions regarding the company with regard to his own profit, because the citizens depend on the haulage company and "what touches all...should be decided by all." (p. 284). Walzer's argument is that, as democrats would agree with the citizens' claims made to the father about ownership of the town, so they ought to agree with the claims' about ownership of the company. In each case, the defense of ownership would be made along similar lines: the founder showed entrepreneurial vision and inventiveness, invested money and capital, and recruited volunteers to the enterprise who knew of the structure of authority by which it was run. Walzer concludes that the claims of entrepreneurs to own ventures, whether political or economic, that seriously affect the lives of many, are to be rejected by democrats and socialists alike. [Moreover, he rejects putative distinctions between town and company that refer to the former as a residential community and the latter as not being; and to the former as made up of consumers and the latter of producers] (pp. 287-289).

⁴⁸² Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 298.

⁴⁸³ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 242.

⁴⁸⁴ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 243.

⁴⁸⁵ Later on p. 243 he writes, "The nature of tyranny is to desire power over the whole world and outside its own sphere".

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- ⁴⁸⁶ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 237. Walzer does not specify whether this is a traditional or a neo-conservative view, but he elsewhere refers to Kristol as a neo-conservative/nervous liberal. (p. 94).
- ⁴⁸⁷ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 238.
- ⁴⁸⁸ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, pp. 238-239. The quote is from Kristol.
- ⁴⁸⁹ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 239.
- ⁴⁹⁰ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 239. Walzer goes on to argue that the curve that is reflected by incomes in the contemporary USA is that for the ability to make money, although even this is not precisely echoed.
- ⁴⁹¹ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 240. Accepting that rich people tend to appear talented to “the deferential observer,” Walzer insists that “the first task of social science...[is] to look beyond...appearances.”
- ⁴⁹² Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 242.
- ⁴⁹³ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 243.
- ⁴⁹⁴ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 244. I will discuss the quote in greater detail in the next chapter.
- ⁴⁹⁵ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 245.
- ⁴⁹⁶ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 245.
- ⁴⁹⁷ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 246. He argues that money should not buy such things as the National Book Award or the American League. More importantly, it cannot buy legal justice or political power.
- ⁴⁹⁸ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 248. As long as this is the case, Walzer says that money must be roughly equally distributed so as “to minimize its distorting effects upon legitimate distributive processes.”
- ⁴⁹⁹ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 249. Given this argument, it may be unsurprising that Walzer sees the argument for enterprise and inventiveness as a “very strong argument” in favor of inequality, even though he concludes that it cannot get very far because the jobs for which the highest salaries are paid are those for which many rewards other than those of enterprise are available. In particular, corporate executives are rewarded by such things as the exercise of power. (pp. 251-252).
- ⁵⁰⁰ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 253.
- ⁵⁰¹ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 255.
- ⁵⁰² Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 256. This is because the “right reason” for distributing an array of social goods, including “love, belief, and most important...political power” is “the freely given consent of lovers, believers, and citizens...Without liberty, then, there could be no rightful distribution at all. On the other hand, we are not free, not politically free at least, if his yes, because of his birth or place or fortune, counts seventeen times more heavily than my no.”
- ⁵⁰³ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, p. 5.
- ⁵⁰⁴ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, pp. 1-3.
- ⁵⁰⁵ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, p. 3.
- ⁵⁰⁶ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, p. 5.
- ⁵⁰⁷ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 16.
- ⁵⁰⁸ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, p. 8.
- ⁵⁰⁹ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, p. 16.
- ⁵¹⁰ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, p. 16.
- ⁵¹¹ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, p. 17.
- ⁵¹² According to the theory of the divine right of kings, the king’s person was the representation of what we now call the state. As that was then commonly referred to as the “body politic” and widely described as being a living organism, the king was taken to have two bodies – his natural body and his embodiment of the body politic. However, the imagery of the divine right theorists was somewhat slippery, as the king was also commonly taken to be the head of the body politic and the people to be the body itself. (This image is most famously shown in the frontispiece to Hobbes’ *Leviathan*, in which, as Walzer points out on p. 25, the king is depicted as having a body made up of the smaller bodies of his subjects. Hobbes, of course, was an opponent of the theory of divine right, but he shared a belief in the necessity of political

absolutism.) The king must therefore have absolute power because “A body with two heads would be a monster.” (p. 24). Only later in the century did defenders of popular sovereignty depart from the idea that a body politic must have only one head and allow for mixed government. (As in Locke’s *Two Treatises of Government*).

⁵¹³ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, p. 26. As the king was thought of as a “benevolent parent,” whatever harm he caused the people could not be attributed to him, and therefore his counselors were often stigmatized as being “evil men.”

⁵¹⁴ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, p. 16.

⁵¹⁵ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, p. 35. Bold emphasis added; italicization in the original.

⁵¹⁶ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, pp. 37-39. As Walzer notes, in early modern Europe it “was a serious matter to call a king a tyrant; the word had deep resonances in the history of the old regime.” (p. 38).

⁵¹⁷ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, pp. 42-43.

⁵¹⁸ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, p. 44. Emphasis in the original.

⁵¹⁹ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, p. 46.

⁵²⁰ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, p. 47.

⁵²¹ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, p. 47.

⁵²² Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, p. 49.

⁵²³ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, pp. 50-51. The French Huguenots adopted a similar stance to the question on Walzer’s analysis.

⁵²⁴ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, p. 51.

⁵²⁵ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, p. 55.

⁵²⁶ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, p. 60.

⁵²⁷ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, p. 61.

⁵²⁸ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, p. 62.

⁵²⁹ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, p. 64. Note the coincidence with Charles I, who perpetually repeated the refrain that he was not being tried by legal authority.

⁵³⁰ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, p. 75.

⁵³¹ See the previous page for Walzer’s assertion that the Jacobins took monarchical ideology seriously.

⁵³² Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, pp. 76-77. (emphasis added).

⁵³³ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, p. 76. See p. 69 for details of Louis’s crimes.

⁵³⁴ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, p. 77.

⁵³⁵ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, p. 79.

⁵³⁶ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 255-263, contains a discussion of when it is permissible to “override” the rules of war.

⁵³⁷ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, p. 82.

⁵³⁸ Executing Louis because of the expected response to any other punishment is of course to punish him for being a king, which as Walzer notes is seemingly similar to punishing someone for being Jewish. He explains away the problem by positing a difference between “taking into account what a man is in determining the extent of his punishment and punishing him for being what he is.” (p. 83).

⁵³⁹ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, p. 85. Emphasis added.

⁵⁴⁰ Walzer concludes his argument by saying that Louis and Charles received greater justice in execution than they could otherwise have hoped for, because they were able to speak eloquently at their trials, to die “with grace and dignity,” rather than obscurely or ignominiously, and that they “died as they had tried to live, as bodies [both] politic and natural, symbols of a regime.” (p. 86).

⁵⁴¹ Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, p. 89.

⁵⁴² The trials and executions of Charles and of Louis.

⁵⁴³ My account is only of the 90-odd-page introduction to *Regicide and Revolution* written by Walzer. The remainder of the book is made up of a series of speeches given at the trial of Louis XVI by Saint-Just, Robespierre, Condorcet, Paine and others, followed by a two-page appendix with the relevant excerpts

from the French Constitution of 1791. Walzer drew heavily on some of the speeches in presenting his argument, in particular on those of Saint-Just. Each speech is preceded by a two-paragraph contextualization of the speech in question.

⁵⁴⁴ “World War II: Why Was This War Different?” was actually Walzer’s first contribution to *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, and the first article that the journal ever published. His next article in it was “The Moral Standing of States.”

⁵⁴⁵ Walzer, “Political Action,” p. 278.

⁵⁴⁶ It also seems a curious topic for Charles Taylor to have acted as discussant on.

⁵⁴⁷ Walzer, “Political Action,” p. 278. Participants to the symposium included Walzer himself, but also Thomas Nagel, who took the ‘absolutist’ position, R. B. Brandt, who argued that moral dilemmas could not possibly happen, and R. M. Hare, who thought that moral dilemmas were the illusory beliefs produced by ordinary moral principles and education.

⁵⁴⁸ Walzer, “Political Action,” p. 279.

⁵⁴⁹ This is a summary of Walzer, “Political Action,” pp. 280-281. It is also important to note that Walzer recognizes that moral dilemmas are of particular relevance to political leaders because “the pleasures of ruling” may easily lead to corruption and because, as Weber noted in “Politics as a Vocation,” political leaders monopolize the use and threat of violence. Yet, Walzer argues, lying rather than murder is the principal stock in trade of that particular convention.

⁵⁵⁰ Walzer, “Political Action,” p. 279.

⁵⁵¹ Walzer, “Political Action,” p. 281.

⁵⁵² Walzer, “Political Action,” p. 282.

⁵⁵³ Walzer, “Political Action,” p. 283.

⁵⁵⁴ Walzer, “Political Action,” p. 286.

⁵⁵⁵ Note also that torture is said to be abominable, just as the crimes of Charles and Louis were said in *Regicide and Revolution* to be an “abhorrence”.

⁵⁵⁶ Walzer, “Political Action,” p. 285.

⁵⁵⁷ Walzer, “Political Action,” pp. 286-287. I say that Walzer supports this response with qualification because he notes the problem that the feeling in question, while useful, is unlikely to be felt by those who we would most desire to feel it: namely, those who are most convinced of the usefulness of the feeling. Walzer develops his point further by considering the practice of distributing blanks to some members of a firing squad so that none of the members know whether they killed the victim or not. This practice apparently reduces the feelings of guilt, and Walzer applauds the practice because it reduces the incidence of innocent suffering. The case is different, he says, when a member of the firing squad is opposed to capital punishment or thinks the victim innocent but participates because of some overriding reason. Here, Walzer says, the member in question ought not to be comforted by the trick and ought not merely to feel guilty but to “know that he is guilty.” The point is that our “guilt feelings can be tricked away when they are isolated from our moral beliefs, as in the first case, but not when they are allied with them, as in the second. The beliefs... can only be overridden, a painful process... which leaves pain behind, and should do so.” (pp. 288). Note the emphasis in the use of overridden, which is in the original.

⁵⁵⁸ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 323-325.

⁵⁵⁹ Walzer, “Political Action,” p. 289.

⁵⁶⁰ This paragraph is a summary of “Political Action,” pp. 289-290.

⁵⁶¹ Walzer, “Political Action,” pp. 290-291. Note the resemblance with the importance of the executions of Charles and Louis because of the expressive power of those executions as a symbol of disdain for monarchy and the theory of divine right.

⁵⁶² Walzer, “Political Action,” pp. 291-292.

⁵⁶³ Walzer, “Political Action,” p. 292.

⁵⁶⁴ Walzer, “Political Action,” p. 293.

⁵⁶⁵ Walzer, “Political Action,” p. 293.

⁵⁶⁶ Two other significant articles written in 1980 are in that chapter, but that is because they are on themes that Walzer was to take up again in the early 1980s. Those articles are M. Walzer, "Pluralism: A Political Perspective," in *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, ed. S. Thernstrom, A. Orlow, and O. Handlin, (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1980), pp. 781-787, and "Political Decision-Making and Political Education," in *Political Theory and Political Education*, ed. M. Richter, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 159-176.

⁵⁶⁷ Some of Walzer's articles from the early 1980s touch on related themes such as conscription and minority rights, but his next major contribution to debates about war is "The Reform of the International System," in *Studies of War and Peace*, ed. O. Osterud, (Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1986), pp. 227-250, 276.

⁵⁶⁸ It should be noted that "The Moral Standing of States" also anticipates in important ways the argument of "Philosophy and Democracy," *Political Theory*, 9, (1981), 379-399. This is particularly evident at the end of "The Moral Standing," when Walzer argues that the distinction between him and his critics is essentially one between his "defense of politics" and their "traditional philosophical dislike for politics." (p. 234). Given that a case could be made that Walzer takes the meaning of politics in any meaningful sense to be more or less synonymous with that of democracy, we can see that in the last page of "The Moral Standing" he takes up the themes that he was to enlarge upon in the aptly entitled "Philosophy and Democracy" the following year.

⁵⁶⁹ Walzer, "The Moral Standing of States," p. 219. The articles that Walzer refers to are: R. Wasserstrom, "Review of Michael Walzer's *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*," *Harvard Law Review*, vol. 92, no. 2 (December 1978), 536-545; G. Doppelt, "Walzer's Theory of Morality in International Relations," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, vol. 8, no. 1 (Autumn 1978), 3-26; C. Beitz, "Bounded Morality: Justice and the State in World Politics," *International Organizations*, vol. 33, no. 3 (Summer 1979), 405-424; D. Luban, "Just War and Human Rights," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, vol. 9, no. 2 (Winter 1980), 161-181.

⁵⁷⁰ Walzer, "The Moral Standing of States," p. 220.

⁵⁷¹ Walzer, "The Moral Standing of States," p. 220.

⁵⁷² Walzer, "The Moral Standing of States," p. 233. In this regard, Walzer is on common ground with "realists" such as those he opened *Just and Unjust Wars* by attacking. See K. Waltz, "Globalization and Governance," *Political Science & Politics*, vol. 32, no. 4 (December 1999), 693-700.

⁵⁷³ Walzer, "The Moral Standing of States," p. 233.

⁵⁷⁴ Walzer, "The Moral Standing of States," p. 220. Walzer is paraphrasing E. Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 96.

⁵⁷⁵ Walzer, "The Moral Standing of States," p. 221.

⁵⁷⁶ Walzer, "The Moral Standing of States," p. 223. C.f. *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 89.

⁵⁷⁷ Walzer, "The Moral Standing of States," p. 223. Note that Walzer includes subjects as those whose rights could be violated, presumably to insist that respect for collective self-determination includes toleration of non-democratic regimes.

⁵⁷⁸ Walzer, "The Moral Standing of States," p. 224.

⁵⁷⁹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 86-108.

⁵⁸⁰ Walzer, "The Moral Standing of States," p. 225.

⁵⁸¹ Walzer, "The Moral Standing of States," p. 230.

⁵⁸² Walzer, "The Moral Standing of States," p. 229.

⁵⁸³ Walzer, "The Moral Standing of States," pp. 229-230. Walzer calls this approach, following Wasserstrom, "the utilitarianism of rights." See p. 229.

⁵⁸⁴ Walzer, "The Moral Standing of States," pp. 230-231.

⁵⁸⁵ Walzer, "The Moral Standing of States," p. 231.

⁵⁸⁶ Walzer, "The Moral Standing of States," p. 232.

⁵⁸⁷ Walzer, "The Moral Standing of States," p. 227.

⁵⁸⁸ Walzer, "The Moral Standing of States," p. 227.

⁵⁸⁹ It may also be worthy of note that, in agreeing with his critics that an intervention in apartheid South Africa might have been justified, Walzer denies that such an intervention would not have accorded with his principles. As he notes, far from being a case of “ordinary oppression,” apartheid could be accurately categorized as both a case of near slavery/virtual slavery and a struggle for national liberation. Indeed, he claims that American activists in that particular struggle tended to make precisely those arguments. See “The Moral Standing of States,” p. 226.

⁵⁹⁰ Walzer, “The Moral Standing of States,” p. 234. Emphasis added.

⁵⁹¹ The same is of course true of democratic regimes. Regardless of the regime, only massive violations of human rights can justify interference with its sovereignty. Interventions are also justified according to Walzer in the cases of secession and counter-intervention, but these are not interventions in the affairs of a political community in quite the same way, as in both cases Walzer would argue that two different communities are involved.

⁵⁹² Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, p. 3.

⁵⁹³ M. Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” *Political Theory*, vol. 9 (1981), 379-399.

⁵⁹⁴ M. Walzer, “The Distribution of Membership,” in *Boundaries: National Autonomy and Its Limits*, ed. P. G. Brown and H. Shue, (Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1981), pp. 1-35; and “Response to Chaney and Lichtenberg,” in *Boundaries*, pp. 101-105.

⁵⁹⁵ These were: 1) “Democracy vs. Elections: Primaries Have Ruined Our Politics,” *New Republic* 184, January 3 and 10, 1981, 17-19 (a piece in which Walzer rehearses some of the arguments made in chapter 12 of *Spheres of Justice*); 2) “An Exchange on Hiroshima: Michael Walzer and Paul Fussell on the Moral Calculus of the Bomb,” *New Republic* 185, September 23, 1981, 13-14; 3) “Totalitarianism vs. Authoritarianism: The Theory of Tyranny, the Tyranny of Theory,” *New Republic* 185, July 4 and 11, 1981, 21, 24-25.

⁵⁹⁶ M. Walzer, “The Courts, the Elections, and the People,” *Dissent*, spring 1981, 153-155.

⁵⁹⁷ M. Walzer, “Two Kinds of Military Responsibility,” *Parameters*, vol. 11 (March 1981), 42-46.

⁵⁹⁸ These were “Consenting to One’s Own Death: The Case of Brutus,” in *Beneficent Euthanasia*, ed. M. Kohl, (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1975), pp. 100-105, and “Terrorism: A Debate” in *New Republic* 173 (December 27, 1975), 12-15.

⁵⁹⁹ As we shall see, one of the puzzling features about *Spheres of Justice* is that Walzer, like Michael Sandel in *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* the year before, frequently takes up the criticisms of Rawls and other egalitarian liberals advanced by Robert Nozick in *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. As Nozick’s libertarianism is in its policy platform far less congenial to either Walzer or Sandel than is Rawls’s liberalism - called “liberal socialism” by Rawls on various occasions after 1975 – this is a noteworthy fact. In the interview with Walzer published in *Thinking Politically*, he regrets (“I am afraid”) the “political” victory of “the Nozickians” over “the Rawlsians” (*Thinking Politically*, p. 308). In Walzer’s case, at least, I shall argue below that the different justifications of equality that the traditions of radical democracy and of liberal equality offer explain why he uses seemingly anti-egalitarian arguments in a defense of equality.

⁶⁰⁰ “Some of the essays collected in my book *Radical Principles*... first published in the magazine *Dissent*, are early and tentative statements of the theory presented here.” (Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, p. xviii). This is obviously, but by no means only, true of the article “In Defense of Equality” from section IV of *Radical Principles*.

⁶⁰¹ M. Walzer, “Liberalism and the Art of Separation,” *Political Theory*, 12 (1984), 315-330.

⁶⁰² Co-edited with Menachem Lorberbaum, Noam Zohar, and Ari Ackerman, published by Yale University Press, New Haven. Volume 1: Authority (2000); Volume 2: Membership (2003).

⁶⁰³ M. Walzer, *Law, Politics, and Morality in Judaism*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.)

⁶⁰⁴ Walzer, “Political Decision-Making and Political Education,” in *Political Theory and Political Education*, pp. 159-176.

⁶⁰⁵ “The Distribution of Membership” could be considered a major article, but it is an earlier version of chapter 2 of *Spheres of Justice*. Likewise, M. Walzer, “The Politics of the Intellectual: Julien Benda’s La

Trahsion des Clercs Reconsidered,” in *Conflict and Consensus: A Festschrift in Honor of Lewis A. Coser*, ed. W. Powell and R. Robbins, (New York: Macmillan, 1984), pp. 365-366, is an early version of *The Company of Critics*, and will be discussed in the next chapter. Finally, M. Walzer, “Political Alienation and Military Service,” in *The Military Draft: Selected Readings on Conscription*, ed. M. Anderson, (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1982), pp. 153-170, is a reprinting of a chapter from *Obligations*.

⁶⁰⁶ Walzer, “Political Decision-Making and Political Education,” p. 159.

⁶⁰⁷ Walzer, “Political Decision-Making and Political Education,” p. 160.

⁶⁰⁸ Walzer, “Political Decision-Making and Political Education,” p. 160.

⁶⁰⁹ Walzer, “Political Decision-Making and Political Education,” pp. 160-161.

⁶¹⁰ Walzer, “Political Decision-Making and Political Education,” p. 163.

⁶¹¹ Walzer, “Political Decision-Making and Political Education,” p. 163.

⁶¹² Walzer, “Political Decision-Making and Political Education,” pp. 164-165. It is also worthy of note that “Political Decision-Making” also revisits the debate in “Dirty Hands” about whether it makes sense to draw a distinction between private morality and that of political leaders. In this article, he claims that the distinction is “badly drawn” because it fails “to take into account the close resemblance of actual and vicarious decision-making in a democracy.” In other words, both leaders and citizens act out both the realist and the moralist models at various times; both try to do “the right thing” and both find realism to be “a constant temptation.” (p. 166).

⁶¹³ Walzer, “Political Decision-Making and Political Education,” p. 167.

⁶¹⁴ Walzer, “Political Decision-Making and Political Education,” p. 169. The quote is drawn from the *Oxford English Dictionary* and included in the footnote on pp. 175-176, in which Walzer insists that casuistry does not need to imply “hypocritical quibbling” but simply “moral worry”.

⁶¹⁵ Walzer, “Political Decision-Making and Political Education,” p. 169. As Walzer points out, casuistry was originally the way in which priests were trained.

⁶¹⁶ Walzer, “Political Decision-Making and Political Education,” p. 170.

⁶¹⁷ Walzer, “Political Decision-Making and Political Education,” p. 170.

⁶¹⁸ Walzer, “Political Decision-Making and Political Education,” p. 174.

⁶¹⁹ Walzer, “Political Decision-Making and Political Education,” p. 175.

⁶²⁰ The example is on pp. 172-173 of “Political Decision-Making”. Walzer poses the question of how citizens should judge whether such a lieutenant was a hypocrite if he claimed to be committed to the “rules of war”. Such a decision could be made only by thinking about his reasons for violating them. Hence mulling over what we might have done in such a situation is an example of retrospective decision-making and brings us to the more arduous task of judging the lieutenant’s conduct and not simply of exposing hypocrisy.

⁶²¹ Walzer, “Political Decision-Making and Political Education,” p. 159.

⁶²² Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” in *Political Theory*, 9 (1981), 379-399, reprinted in *Thinking Politically*, pp. 1-21. My citations are to the printing in *Thinking Politically*. For ease of reference, I cite *Thinking Politically* for all the articles reprinted in it. The quote is from p. 1.

⁶²³ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” p. 1.

⁶²⁴ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” p. 1.

⁶²⁵ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” p. 19.

⁶²⁶ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” pp. 1-2.

⁶²⁷ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” p. 2.

⁶²⁸ It is true that Walzer says that he does “not know whether the philosopher has to be a political outsider,” but as he then points out that Wittgenstein says “any” community, and that the state is “the most likely community from which he will have to detach himself,” it would appear that placing the philosopher firmly inside the community does indeed offer a critique of Wittgenstein’s definition of a philosopher. Walzer’s insistence in the preface to *Spheres*, reiterated in *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, that he will stay “inside the cave” makes a similar point.

⁶²⁹ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” p. 2.

⁶³⁰ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” p. 2. Walzer then claims, as does Hannah Arendt, that Socrates was a sophist.

⁶³¹ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” p. 3.

⁶³² It is because Walzer sees poets as not cutting themselves off from “the community of ideas” that he distinguishes the search for “exile and trouble” of poets with the detachment of philosophers. See pp. 3-4.

⁶³³ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” p. 5.

⁶³⁴ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” p. 6.

⁶³⁵ Walzer, “Liberalism and the Art of Separation,” in *Thinking Politically*, p. 65.

⁶³⁶ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” p. 6.

⁶³⁷ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” p. 6.

⁶³⁸ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” pp. 6-7. The “within some area” is intended to take the first two constraints into account and rule out wrongful action that is either not general or that would “preclude future democratic action within the area.”

⁶³⁹ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” p. 8.

⁶⁴⁰ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” pp. 8-9.

⁶⁴¹ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” p. 10.

⁶⁴² Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” pp. 10-11.

⁶⁴³ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” pp. 12-14.

⁶⁴⁴ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” p. 12.

⁶⁴⁵ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” p. 12.

⁶⁴⁶ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” pp. 12-13.

⁶⁴⁷ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” p. 13.

⁶⁴⁸ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” pp. 13-14.

⁶⁴⁹ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” p. 14.

⁶⁵⁰ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” p. 14.

⁶⁵¹ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” p. 15.

⁶⁵² Nearly two decades later, in *The Law of Peoples*, Rawls argued that there were at least two original positions.

⁶⁵³ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” p. 15.

⁶⁵⁴ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” p. 15. I personally cannot for the life of me understand why “an act of empathy” is more likely to make people value cultural diversity than it is to make them respect the needs of members of their own community. I personally would find it much easier to empathize with someone who wants to be guaranteed a certain calorific intake every day regardless of whether other members of their community want them to have that intake than with someone who wants to have the right to dictate how much others should have to eat provided that they can persuade other people that that person does not deserve to have their needs met.

⁶⁵⁵ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” p. 16.

⁶⁵⁶ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” p. 16.

⁶⁵⁷ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. xi.

⁶⁵⁸ The quote that most sums up the position is, in my view, on p. 20, where Walzer writes, “No social good x should be distributed to men and women who possess some other good y merely because they possess y and without regard to the meaning of x.” See also the critique of theories of primary or basic goods that makes up proposition 3 of the “Theory of Goods” (p. 8). Rawls is patently a principal target.

⁶⁵⁹ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. xiii.

⁶⁶⁰ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 6. Nozick, or other libertarians, might deny that their theories follow the first model, since one of their central arguments has often been that distributive justice is a misnomer since there is nobody who distributes. I suspect that this is one reason why Walzer makes it clear in his definition that people distribute the goods collectively rather than through a central distributive organism. On p. 11 of *Spheres*, Walzer argues that when a monopoly controls a dominant good, the members of that monopoly do indeed “stand atop the distributive system – much as philosophers... might like to do”.

⁶⁶¹ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 26.

⁶⁶² Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 26. Walzer considers whether free exchange, desert, or need could serve as a distributive principle on pp. 21-26.

⁶⁶³ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 312.

⁶⁶⁴ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 314. My emphasis.

⁶⁶⁵ See, for example, Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” p. 8.

⁶⁶⁶ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 313.

⁶⁶⁷ It appears for the first time on pp. 8-9 in point 4 of the “Theory of Goods”. Walzer argues that the principle, “All distributions are just or unjust relative to the social meanings of the goods at stake” is both “a principle of legitimation” and “a critical principle,” before considering in a footnote whether “social meanings” are anything other than the “ideas of the ruling class,” as Marx had suggested. Walzer rejects the Marxist position on the grounds that the “common understanding of particular goods incorporates principles... that the rulers would not choose if they were choosing right now – and so provides the terms of social criticism.” That the ruling class may have more power than others in determining what the shared understandings are does not, on Walzer’s view, mean that the shared understandings are a chimera.

⁶⁶⁸ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 7.

⁶⁶⁹ Walzer, *Spheres*, pp. 7-10.

⁶⁷⁰ Walzer, *Spheres*, pp. 10-13.

⁶⁷¹ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 13.

⁶⁷² It should be obvious that Walzer assumes that people’s talents are in a certain sense equal overall. The person best capable of earning money will not be the same person as the one best capable of winning over voters through inspired oratory, or the one best capable of inspiring love or friendship. Walzer argues as much on several occasions in the book, for example on pp. 320-321 when considering whether intellectuals might dominate society (this section rehearses arguments made in *Radical Principles*). On each occasion, Walzer rejects the idea that people might claim monopolies in multiple spheres for reasons internal to that sphere. It seems to be the case that he believes that, where people appear to have multiple talents, the appearance is in fact because of the dominance of a good in which they do indeed have an outstanding talent. Although there may be the occasional Emma Woodhouse (“handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition”) who seems “to unite some of the best blessings of existence,” such people will be too rare to be problematic from the viewpoint of justice or the multiplicity of their talents will be the result of the dominance of certain spheres. In Emma’s case, perhaps, her looks and her intelligence were helped by the wealth of her family, which enabled her to take more care of her body and offered her a greater range of educational opportunities than would be allowable in a just society. (These quotations are from the first page of Jane Austen’s *Emma*).

⁶⁷³ Chapter 2 – on membership – is also, strictly speaking, a consideration of a distributive sphere, but Walzer’s argument is structurally different here from what it is in the other chapters for reasons I will discuss in the next section of the chapter.

⁶⁷⁴ Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, p. 134. It is important to note that Walzer uses the term meritocracy in a specific, Rawlsian sense; so as to approximate what Rawls calls “fair equality of opportunity”. Walzer’s alternative name for the practice is “a universal civil service”.

⁶⁷⁵ Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, pp. 134-135.

⁶⁷⁶ Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, p. 135.

⁶⁷⁷ This is perhaps most provocatively the case in the sphere of love. Walzer repeats several times Marx’s claim that someone who loves without being loved in return is the victim of misfortune and argues that nothing can be done for someone who isn’t loved. (This claim is advanced in opposition to the Platonic guardian model). Whether people who aren’t loved would be consoled by extra office, or wealth, or political power (or vice versa) in a complexly equal society seems to me extremely uncertain. In other words, Walzer assumes not only some sort of equality of talents overall but also some sort of equality of importance between the spheres.

⁶⁷⁸ That the article is itself part of the Anglo-American mainstream is beyond dispute. It is one of the articles most commonly assigned to university undergraduates; after “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism” to be sure, but perhaps on a par with “The Moral Standing of States,” “Philosophy and Democracy,” and “Political Action”. Like “The Communitarian Critique,” “Liberalism and the Art of Separation” appeals to university professors because it offers a succinct, critical commentary on the “liberal-communitarian debate” of which Walzer is one of the principal protagonists. On a personal note, this article was also one of the earliest I read myself.

⁶⁷⁹ Walzer, “Liberalism and the Art of Separation,” in *Thinking Politically*, p. 66.

⁶⁸⁰ Walzer, “Liberalism,” p. 53.

⁶⁸¹ Walzer, “Liberalism,” p. 55.

⁶⁸² But before determining where liberalism is on the political spectrum, we would have to know what type of liberalism Walzer has in mind. In this article, he seems to use it as a catchall term and not merely as a synonym for Rawlsianism. In that case, liberalism is plausibly seen as centrist.

⁶⁸³ Walzer, “Liberalism,” pp. 54-55. The latter then went on to become a sphere of sexual freedom, but “it isn’t originally or primarily that.”

⁶⁸⁴ Walzer, “Liberalism,” p. 57. However, Walzer notes, liberals often “misunderstand” that process of social differentiation. Moreover, he notes two caveats that are worth mentioning in passing. First, the different spheres of society do “bear a family resemblance to one another” (p. 57). Secondly, the Marxist critique is not always that the art of separation is a mask for unified power interests. In his early writing, Marx often described the art as having been all too successful and hence having created atomized individuals (p. 56).

⁶⁸⁵ Walzer, “Liberalism,” p. 58.

⁶⁸⁶ Walzer, “Liberalism,” p. 58.

⁶⁸⁷ Walzer, “Liberalism,” pp. 58-59.

⁶⁸⁸ The following argument – about the importance of recognizing that money can dominate as easily as politics can – is another argument first rehearsed in *Spheres of Justice*.

⁶⁸⁹ Walzer, “Liberalism,” p. 59.

⁶⁹⁰ Walzer, “Liberalism,” p. 59. This is for three reasons: first, unequal wealth creates coercion as “many exchanges are only formally free”; secondly, some types of market power are organized using structures that greatly resemble governmental structures; thirdly, capital is able to co-opt government. All three of these reasons are also pointed out in *Spheres of Justice* (and in earlier works such as *Radical Principles*).

⁶⁹¹ Walzer, “Liberalism,” p. 60.

⁶⁹² Walzer, “Liberalism,” p. 60. This would be a consistent liberalism because of an analogy Walzer draws between freedom of religion and the free market. In his view, private conscience and individual enterprise are analogues, but so are congregational self-government and co-operative ownership.

⁶⁹³ Walzer, “Liberalism,” p. 62.

⁶⁹⁴ Walzer, “Liberalism,” p. 63.

⁶⁹⁵ Walzer, “Liberalism,” p. 63.

⁶⁹⁶ Walzer, “Liberalism,” p. 63.

⁶⁹⁷ Walzer, “Liberalism,” p. 66.

⁶⁹⁸ Walzer, “Liberalism,” p. 65.

⁶⁹⁹ M. Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution*, (New York: Basic Books, 1985), pp. xi-xii. This is not to say that *Exodus and Revolution* is only of interest to those interested in Jewish history. Walzer also cites colleagues from the Institute for Advanced Study, and thanks Indiana University and the University of Chicago for allowing him to lecture on the material in the book. I will argue that *Exodus and Revolution* is some sort of sequel to *Regicide and Revolution*. It is by no means purely about Judaism.

⁷⁰⁰ In this case, I refer not to his political activism, but to his knowledge of biblical and more recent Hebrew. See Walzer, *Exodus*, pp. ix-x.

⁷⁰¹ Walzer, *Exodus*, p. ix.

⁷⁰² The first few pages of the book are dedicated to an account of all the occasions on which Walzer encountered liberation movements citing the Exodus as inspiration. They include the black student sit-ins in Alabama in the early 1960s, the Puritan Revolution in 17th Century England, the “liberation theology” of contemporary Latin Americans, and even a defense of Leninism by Lincoln Steffens (pp. 3-4). Even the French Revolutionaries, who were hostile to the Judaeo-Christian tradition, sometimes slipped in references to periods of 40 years in the wilderness (p. 5).

⁷⁰³ Walzer, *Exodus*, p. 9.

⁷⁰⁴ Walzer, *Exodus*, p. 7.

⁷⁰⁵ Walzer, *Exodus*, p. 17.

⁷⁰⁶ This is the topic of chapter 2, “The Murmurings: Slaves in the Wilderness,” pp. 41-70.

⁷⁰⁷ The analogy with Dante is my own. Walzer himself describes his account as “a classic narrative, with a beginning, a middle, and an end: problem, struggle, resolution – Egypt, the wilderness, the promised land (pp. 10-11).

⁷⁰⁸ Walzer, *Exodus*, p. 12.

⁷⁰⁹ Walzer, *Exodus*, p. 14.

⁷¹⁰ Walzer, *Exodus*, p. 16.

⁷¹¹ Walzer, *Exodus*, p. 149.

⁷¹² Walzer, *Exodus*, pp. 19-40.

⁷¹³ Walzer, *Exodus*, pp. 41-70.

⁷¹⁴ Walzer, *Exodus*, pp. 71-98.

⁷¹⁵ Walzer, *Exodus*, pp. 99-130.

⁷¹⁶ Walzer, *Exodus*, p. 12.

⁷¹⁷ Walzer *Exodus*, p. 17.

⁷¹⁸ The full list is on p. 149, the final page of the text.

⁷¹⁹ Walzer, *Exodus*, p. 149.

⁷²⁰ Walzer, *Exodus*, p. 21.

⁷²¹ Walzer, *Exodus*, pp. 21-22.

⁷²² Walzer, *Exodus*, pp. 22-23.

⁷²³ Walzer, *Exodus*, pp. 25-27.

⁷²⁴ Walzer, *Exodus*, p. 29. According to the Bible, the Jews had originally come to Egypt during the famine in the time of Joseph.

⁷²⁵ Walzer, *Exodus*, p. 30.

⁷²⁶ Walzer, *Exodus*, p. 28.

⁷²⁷ Walzer, *Exodus*, pp. 33-40.

⁷²⁸ Walzer, *Exodus*, pp. 55-61.

⁷²⁹ Walzer, *Exodus*, p. 40.

⁷³⁰ See the discussion of “Egypt in Canaan” on pp. 113-115.

⁷³¹ This recalls the arguments of “A Theory of Revolution”.

⁷³² Walzer, *Exodus*, p. 103.

⁷³³ Walzer, *Exodus*, p. 104.

⁷³⁴ Walzer, *Exodus*, p. 108.

⁷³⁵ See p. 109, on which Walzer notes that the “kingdom of priests” and the “holy nation” was a key platform in Puritanism, Jacobinism and Leninism.

⁷³⁶ Walzer, *Exodus*, p. 149.

⁷³⁷ Walzer, *Exodus*, p. 149.

⁷³⁸ Like “Liberalism and the Art of Separation,” much of *Exodus and Revolution* adopts a clear political position. In this case, Walzer argues against “the radicalism of right-wing Zionists” (p. 141) or “messianic Zionism” (p. 138). The story he tells is one that de-emphasizes such features as the conquest of Canaan and does not seek to force the “End of Days” but justice here and now. See pp. 136-144 for the detailed account. The tension between the hopefulness of the Exodus story and the “fantasies of political

messianism” (p. 144) is somewhat akin to that between radicals who seek improvement and those who seek paradise. As in “A Theory of Revolution” and in *Political Action*, Walzer insists that radical politics need not be messianic.

⁷³⁹ That what I call “external pluralism” is a feature of the argument of “Philosophy and Democracy” is, I hope, manifest. It is made clear in the claim that the sense of empathy makes pluralists recognize the feelings of members of other communities to be similar to their own and hence respect their desire to “value their own opinions and conventions” (p. 15, see also the discussion above). “Liberalism and the Art of Separation” may seem to make an argument that is better characterized as being about “internal pluralism,” because its focus is on the map of the social world as being divided into different social spheres. However, it touches on external pluralism early in the article with the account of the history of the art of separation and the recognition that the pre-liberal map looked very different.

⁷⁴⁰ A similar argument is also made in several of Walzer’s contributions to *Dissent* and the *New Republic* and other public intellectual journals in this period. Notable examples of such articles are: “Deterrence and Democracy: In a Nuclear Age We Need Both ‘Normal’ and ‘Abnormal’ Politics,” *New Republic* 191 (July 2, 1984), 16-21; and “Dirty Work Should Be Shared: In a Society of Equals, Garbage is Everyone’s Business,” in *Harper’s* 265 (December 1982), 22-31.

⁷⁴¹ For this caveat, see *Spheres*, pp. 39-40 for the discussion of the “moral asymmetry” between immigration and emigration.

⁷⁴² Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 28.

⁷⁴³ Walzer, *Spheres*, pp. 313-315. C.f. the argument about “the unavoidable risk of democracy” in “Liberalism and the Art of Separation” (p. 65). It should be noted, of course, that *Interpretation and Social Criticism* was written largely to demonstrate that there are nearly always resources available within a community to argue against defenses of hierarchy that appeal to shared understandings; in other words, to provide a justification of Walzer’s insistence that “social criticism” may be radical and genuinely is a form of criticism. As I said earlier, the footnote on p. 9 of *Spheres* is a forerunner of that argument, which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

⁷⁴⁴ Reading these sections of “Philosophy and Democracy” makes me wonder whether Walzer’s literary interests extend to the work of Dostoyevsky. In *Notes from Underground* – the book that Nietzsche claimed was the most insightful piece of psychology he had ever read – the narrator waxes lyrical about the human desire to do as we wish just for the sake of doing so and even if that desire is self-destructive in a practical sense.

⁷⁴⁵ We shall see this discomfort when we discuss “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism” in the next chapter. That article also contrasts communitarianism with social democracy, but for the purposes of the argument in the remainder of this chapter, it is more significant that it suggests a variation of communitarianism that Walzer sees as being “more available for incorporation within liberal (or social democratic) politics.” See the printing of “The Communitarian Critique” in *Thinking Politically*, pp. 96-114. The quotation is on p. 97.

⁷⁴⁶ However, given that Walzer’s argument is that the distinction is a false one, it could be argued that his claim is that the Israelites are not a pluralist, in the sense of being differentiated, people. Given the argument in “Liberalism and the Art of Separation” that liberalism recognizes the “complexities of modern life” and “reflects and reinforces a long-term process of social differentiation,” while Marxism’s denial of that process “doesn’t connect in any plausible way with the actual experience of contemporary politics” (p. 57), it may be that Walzer sees only modern societies as being differentiated and pluralist. Even if that is the case, it may be that his argument in *Exodus and Revolution* that the claim that the priests had different interests to the people is false is supposed to be one that the people themselves either did or could have made; in other words, that it is an example of social criticism.

⁷⁴⁷ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 223.

⁷⁴⁸ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 318.

⁷⁴⁹ Walzer, *Spheres*, pp. 103-108.

⁷⁵⁰ Walzer, “Liberalism and the Art of Separation,” p. 59.

⁷⁵¹ Walzer, *Spheres*, pp. 99-103.

⁷⁵² Walzer, *Spheres*, pp. 100-101. The complete list of things that cannot be bought and sold is: “1. Human beings...2. Political power and influence...3. Criminal justice...4. Freedom of speech, press, religion, assembly...5. Marriage and procreation rights...6. The right to leave the political community...7...exemptions from military service, from jury duty, and from any other form of communally imposed work...8. Political offices... 9. Basic welfare services like police protection or primary and secondary schooling [these “are purchasable only at the margin,” i.e. so long as basic public provision is ensured]...10. Desperate exchanges [are barred]...11. Prizes and honors of many sorts, public and private...12. Divine grace...13. Love and friendship...14. Finally, a long list of criminal sales.” I posed earlier the question of whether the spheres that Walzer lists in *Spheres* are supposed to be the only spheres of social life – in other words, whether his list of spheres is exhaustive. In the case of “blocked exchanges,” Walzer says that he thinks that the list is exhaustive (p. 103).

⁷⁵³ Of course, one of the reasons Walzer emphasizes this is because many American political thinkers would think that the sphere of politics is the most dangerous and the sphere of money is benign.

⁷⁵⁴ I discussed the account of that theory given in *Radical Principles*. Chapter 8 of *Spheres of Justice* offers an extended version of Walzer’s view of the just educational system. Much of it is based on the argument given in *Radical Principles*. This is particularly so of the argument in favor of neighborhood schools as opposed to either private schooling and educational vouchers, or streaming based on talent, or integration and school busing (pp. 214-226). Here Walzer extends the argument so as to relate it to his account of complex equality. He does this by arguing that neighborhood schooling frees education from the “tyranny” of politics and ensures that education is shaped by principles internal to the sphere itself. In *Spheres*, this account is the second half of the chapter on education. The first half offers a historical account of different patterns of educational provision such as the Japanese example of educational equality (pp. 204-206) and the training for entry into a hierarchical society of George Orwell’s schooldays (pp. 211-213).

⁷⁵⁵ Walzer, “Liberalism and the Art of Separation,” p. 66. C.f. the claim earlier in the chapter that, “The art of separation doesn’t make only for liberty but also for equality” (p. 58).

⁷⁵⁶ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 304.

⁷⁵⁷ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 304.

⁷⁵⁸ Walzer, *Spheres*, pp. 306-312. C.f. M. Walzer, “Democracy vs. Elections: Primaries Have Ruined Our Politics,” *New Republic* 184 (January 3 and 10, 1981), 17-19.

⁷⁵⁹ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 307.

⁷⁶⁰ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 308.

⁷⁶¹ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 310.

⁷⁶² I should say, “being allowed to participate”. Although Walzer valorizes participation, it should be remembered that he never mandates it. This was the case in “A Day in the Life of a Socialist Citizen,” printed in both *Obligations* and *Radical Principles*. It is also the case in Walzer’s argument about naturalization. Guest workers must be offered the chance to become citizens, but they are entitled to refuse it and yet stay in the host country (*Spheres*, p. 60).

⁷⁶³ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” p. 17.

⁷⁶⁴ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” pp. 17-18.

⁷⁶⁵ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy,” p. 17.

⁷⁶⁶ Walzer, *Spheres*, pp. 282-284.

⁷⁶⁷ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 282. C.f. pp. 276-7, in which Walzer argues that democratic citizenship is “a status radically disconnected from every kind of hierarchy.” In a democracy, equal membership is the primary form of status and the first claim to recognition of the citizens is simply that of being a citizen. On the other hand, for most of human history status distinctions were people’s primary means of garnering self-respect. For this reason, the “self-respect of citizens is incompatible...with the kinds of self-respect available in a hierarchy of ranks.”

⁷⁶⁸ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 284.

⁷⁶⁹ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 306.

⁷⁷⁰ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 292.

⁷⁷¹ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 293.

⁷⁷² Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 29.

⁷⁷³ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 49. It is worthy of note that Walzer argues that other refugees do not have any claim to be admitted. They can “appeal to [the] sense” of “relatedness and mutuality” with the country they wish to enter (p. 50). However, this does not apply to asylum seekers who have already succeeded in reaching the shores of the country they wish to enter. Such people must not be forcibly returned (p. 51). Asylum seekers must be admitted because to deport them would be to “use force against helpless and desperate people” in a way that refusing refugees who are not on our shores would not be.

⁷⁷⁴ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 51.

⁷⁷⁵ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 33.

⁷⁷⁶ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 59.

⁷⁷⁷ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 59.

⁷⁷⁸ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 60.

⁷⁷⁹ Walzer also argues that guest workers have not consented to being ruled because their consent is given “at a single moment in time” (p. 58), whereas political decisions must be constantly consented to: they are only ever determined provisionally. Only if they are given the choice of becoming citizens will they in any meaningful sense be said to have acquiesced to the law of the host country.

⁷⁸⁰ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 39.

⁷⁸¹ As Walzer’s comment on accepting refugees of ethnic or ideological affinity suggests, the bounds of the community are somewhat hard to define. Certain extensions beyond the nation-state may occur, but they will mostly be to neighboring regions.

⁷⁸² Walzer, “Liberalism and the Art of Separation,” p. 66.

⁷⁸³ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 223.

⁷⁸⁴ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 318.

⁷⁸⁵ Yet the sporting example is illuminative both of the strength of Walzer’s argument about the different skills needed and of the limits of that argument. For the boundaries are not equal stark between each sport. I know from vast experience that someone who does not play a racket sport regularly has almost no chance of competing with me at one. The likelihood is that we will not really have much of a game at all. I also know from painful experience that first-rate racket-ball or tennis players can beat me at squash easily even if they haven’t played it much before. To return to the Jane Austen example, I do not see how Emma Woodhouse’s money and her looks can be entirely separated. On Walzer’s account, once the sphere of kinship and love is made autonomous from those of rank, money and commodities, office and so on, people will “search for mates whom they find physically or spiritually attractive” (*Spheres*, p. 235). Were he to have said simply “spiritually attractive,” then he might have separated the sphere from that of money and commodities almost entirely (but would he have separated it from that of divine grace?). But someone’s physical attractiveness surely depends in part on how much money they have available to spend on themselves, and this would be true even if the community ensured that members’ nutrition and healthcare met a certain standard. So, having more money available would necessarily give someone an advantage in the sphere of kinship and love. I am not sure whether this means that the spheres are inseparable or that, as in the case of racket sports, there are certain family resemblances between the spheres, such that in a society of complex equality, the boundaries between certain spheres would be more porous than the boundaries between others.

⁷⁸⁶ Walzer, *Spheres*, pp. 84-91.

⁷⁸⁷ Following Marx, Walzer argues that the love of a man who is not loved in return is “impotent and a misfortune” (*Spheres*, pp. 18-19). Likewise, he argues that someone who “is not able, by the manifestation of himself as a worthy person, to make himself a valued person, then his worth is impotent and a misfortune” (*Spheres*, p. 258).

⁷⁸⁸ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. xii.

⁷⁸⁹ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 280.

⁷⁹⁰ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 278.

⁷⁹¹ Walzer, *Spheres*, pp. 277-278.

⁷⁹² This is not to say that the wannabe-mountaineer who is actually a squash player will be as happy as the champion swimmer who dreamt of that goal for her whole life. But the point of complex equality is not to equalize happiness. That might be a desirable thing, but it is not on Walzer's view what justice is about. In any case, I suspect he would argue that such a problem would be less likely to occur were the spheres truly autonomous. Although distinctions between which sports we desire to excel at may well be an idiosyncratic choice (at least with regard to the sports I chose), the preference for excelling in particular spheres of social life such as money or politics probably reflect how society at large values those spheres. If one is more highly valued than another, it is probably a dominant sphere. In a system of complex equality, no sphere would be seen as inherently "better" than any other.

⁷⁹³ There are various other ways in which complex equality is a socialized form of collective life. For example, Walzer argues that particular forms of hard, dangerous, or grueling work ought to be shared (*Spheres*, pp. 165-183) and that free time should not be "distorted" by the "usurpations" of capital, by the "failure of communal provision when provision is called for" [as in the case of the public holiday], or "by the exclusion of slaves, aliens, and pariahs" (*Spheres*, p. 196).

⁷⁹⁴ Walzer, "Liberalism and the Art of Separation," p. 62.

⁷⁹⁵ Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, p. xviii.

⁷⁹⁶ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. xiv.

⁷⁹⁷ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. xiv.

⁷⁹⁸ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. xiv.

⁷⁹⁹ Walzer, *Spheres*, pp. 84-91.

⁸⁰⁰ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 84.

⁸⁰¹ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 88.

⁸⁰² Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, p. 90.

⁸⁰³ Walzer, "Philosophy and Democracy," p. 1.

⁸⁰⁴ Even that question assumes that Walzer's interpretation of the philosophical enterprise of such figures as Rawls and Habermas is an accurate one.

⁸⁰⁵ Walzer, "The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism," p. 97.

⁸⁰⁶ Walzer, "The Communitarian Critique," p. 112.

⁸⁰⁷ Walzer, "Liberalism and the Art of Separation," p. 63.

⁸⁰⁸ Walzer, "Liberalism," p. 65.

⁸⁰⁹ Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, pp. 295-303.

⁸¹⁰ Indeed, in "The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism," Walzer was to make it very plain that he deemed contemporary society to be based on some type of liberalism. See the argument that, "Contemporary liberals are not committed to a presocial self, but only to a self capable of reflecting critically on the values that have governed its socialization; and communitarian critics, who are doing exactly that, can hardly go on to claim that socialization is everything" (p. 111). Communitarian critics reflect critically on liberal values, if in so doing they are reflecting critically on the values that governed their socialization, then the values that governed their socialization must have been liberal values.

⁸¹¹ Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, pp. 297-298. Pullman is the town that George Pullman sought to own in the late 1890s. I already gave the details of the case in the discussion of *Radical Principles* and will not rehearse it now. For the details, the reader should refer to the previous chapter.

⁸¹² Walzer, "The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism," p. 96.

⁸¹³ S. Mulhall and A. Swift, *Liberals and Communitarians*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).

⁸¹⁴ Mulhall and Swift, *Liberals and Communitarians*, pp. 10-34.

⁸¹⁵ It was to become so later, when Walzer published "Objectivity and Social Meaning" in *The Quality of Life*, ed. M. Nussbaum and A. Sen, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 165-177, reprinted in *Thinking Politically*, pp. 38-52.

⁸¹⁶ Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, p. xiv. Walzer sees his approach as standing in opposition to the approach to philosophy that begins by leaving the city so as to “fashion for oneself...an objective and universal standpoint.” I suspect that, for Walzer, the questions of objectivity versus particularism and of universalism versus pluralism are barely separable questions.

⁸¹⁷ Walzer, “Liberalism and the Art of Separation,” p. 62. I suspect that the conception of the self is no more easily distinguished from the asocial individualism of liberalism for Walzer than objectivity and universalism were from each other.

⁸¹⁸ I discussed Walzer’s attitude to perfectionism and neutrality in the account of complex equality and refer the reader back there for an explanation of why the communitarian-seeming nature of his “non-neutral” approach is in fact a part of his democratic socialism. In particular, it results from the importance that he attaches to public debate about how we live our lives in common.

⁸¹⁹ Walzer, *Spheres*, pp. 168-170.

⁸²⁰ In *The Military Draft: Selected Readings*, pp. 153-170.

⁸²¹ Walzer, *Obligations*, p. 118. C.f. “Political Alienation and Military Service,” p. 168. I will cite the printing in *Obligations*.

⁸²² Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 169.

⁸²³ Walzer, *Obligations*, p. 118.

⁸²⁴ This is the interview published in *Thinking Politically* that I have quoted from previously.

⁸²⁵ Walzer, *Spheres*, p. xviii.

⁸²⁶ In many ways, we could argue that its influence has lasted more strongly than has that of the School, although that is a point for consideration in later chapters.

⁸²⁷ Walzer, “Dirty Work Should Be Shared,” 22-31. C.f. *Spheres*, pp. 174-183.

⁸²⁸ Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, pp. 123-128. C.f. M. Walzer, “Socialism and the Gift Relationship,” *Dissent* (Fall 1982), 431-441.

⁸²⁹ I discussed this section of *Spheres of Justice* earlier in the chapter. It is pp. 306-311. It developed out of “Democracy vs. Elections: Primaries Have Ruined Our Politics,” *New Republic* 184 (January 3 and 10 1981), 17-19.

⁸³⁰ Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, pp. 172-174.

⁸³¹ Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, pp. 177-183.

⁸³² Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, pp. 237-239.

⁸³³ Much of the chapter on “Kinship and Love” has this as a topic. See *Spheres of Justice*, pp. 227-242. Compare this with Rawls’s assumption in *A Theory of Justice* that the parties to the original position are “heads of household” and how much of an addition the argument about the position of women and children seems in *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*.

⁸³⁴ Walzer’s academic sources of influence in the early 1980s were also such as to draw him towards focus on lived experience. When he moved to the Institute for Advanced Study, he became colleagues with the prominent anthropologist Clifford Geertz, who is mentioned in the acknowledgements to *Spheres*. Albert Hirschman was another new and important colleague.

⁸³⁵ Most notably, M. Walzer, *Arguing About War*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

⁸³⁶ Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, p. xv.

⁸³⁷ Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, p. xv.

⁸³⁸ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*.

⁸³⁹ M. Walzer, “Justice Here and Now,” in *Justice and Equality Here and Now*, ed. Frank S. Lucash, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), pp. 136-150; Walzer, “The Reform of the International System,” pp. 227-250, 276; and M. Walzer, “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments,” in *American Society: Public and Private Responsibilities*, ed. W. Knowlton and R. Zechhauser, (Cambridge: Harper and Row, Ballinger, 1986), pp. 79-96.

⁸⁴⁰ M. Walzer, “What’s Terrorism – And What Isn’t?” *Dissent* (Summer 1986), 274-275; “Pleasures and Costs of Urbanity,” *Dissent* (Fall 1986), 470-475.

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- ⁸⁴¹ M. Walzer, "Cheap Moralizing," in the symposium "The Jeweler's Dilemma: How Would You Respond?" *New Republic*, 195 (November 10, 1986), 20.
- ⁸⁴² M. Walzer, "The Long-Term Perspective," in *Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, vol. 62 (January-February 1986), 8-14.
- ⁸⁴³ I. Berlin, *The Hedgehog and the Fox*, (Touchstone, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986).
- ⁸⁴⁴ M. Walzer, *Civil Society and American Democracy*, (Berlin: Rotbuch Verlag, 1992). This was the first collection of many. *What It Means to be an American* was originally published in Italian earlier in 1992, but as it was published in English later that same year, is in a slightly different category.
- ⁸⁴⁵ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*.
- ⁸⁴⁶ M. Walzer, *What It Means to be an American*, (New York: Marsilio, 1992).
- ⁸⁴⁷ M. Walzer, *The Company of Critics: Social Criticism and Political Commitment in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Basic Books, 1988).
- ⁸⁴⁸ M. Walzer, "The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism," *Political Theory*, 18, (1990), 6-23.
- ⁸⁴⁹ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. x.
- ⁸⁵⁰ Others include: "Justice Here and Now"; "The Long-Term Perspective"; "Toward a Theory of Social Assignments"; "Socializing the Welfare State," in *Democracy and the Welfare State*, ed. A. Gutmann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 13-26; "The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism"; "The Constitution and Social Change: A Comment," in *The Constitutional Bases of Political and Social Change in the United States*, ed. S. Slonin (New York: Praeger, 1990), pp. 53-56; "On Distributive Justice" and "Education," in *The 1990 American Education Finance Association Yearbook: Spheres of Justice in Education*, ed. D. Versteegen and J. G. Ward, (New York: HarperCollins, Harper Business, 1991), pp. v-viii, 239-268; and "The Idea of Civil Society: A Path to Social Reconstruction," in *Dissent*, (spring 1991), 293-304. (The last of these is republished in M. Walzer, ed, *Toward a Global Civil Society*, (Providence, R.I.: Berghahn Books, 1995), pp. 7-27.
- ⁸⁵¹ This is a prominent theme in all the writings on civil society. It takes center stage in "Citizenship," in *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change*, ed. T. Ball, J. Farr, and R. L. Hanson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 211-219.
- ⁸⁵² This is another recurrent theme. The most prominent and extended discussion of it is in "The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism".
- ⁸⁵³ Printed in *Thinking Politically*, pp. 183-218.
- ⁸⁵⁴ M. Walzer, "Emergency Ethics," the Joseph A. Reich, Sr. Distinguished Lecture on War, Morality, and the Military Profession, no. 1 (November 21, 1988), published in J. Carl Ficarrotta, ed, *The Leader's Imperative: ethics, integrity, and responsibility*, (Purdue University Press, 2001), pp. 126-139. (This edition of the text is probably the easiest to find, as it is published on Google Books).
- ⁸⁵⁵ This is the theme of both M. Walzer, "Perplexed: Moral Ambiguities in the Gulf Crisis," in *New Republic*, vol. 204 (January 1991), 13-15, in which Walzer expresses surprise at the hostility to the impending attempt to expel Iraqi troops from Kuwait, which he takes to be the paradigmatic case of a just cause, and in M. Walzer, "Justice and Injustice in the Gulf War," in *But Was It Just?: Reflections on the Morality of the Persian Gulf War* ed. D. DeCosse, (New York: Doubleday, 1992), pp. 1-17. The latter article is an adaptation of the foreword to the second edition of *Just and Unjust Wars*, also published in 1992.
- ⁸⁵⁶ M. Walzer, "The Green Line: After the Uprising, Israel's New Border," in *New Republic*, vol. 199 (September 5, 1988), 22-24.
- ⁸⁵⁷ M. Walzer, "Terrorism: A Critique of Excuses," in *Problems of International Justice*, ed. S. Luper Foy (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), pp. 237-247.
- ⁸⁵⁸ Indeed, Walzer quotes many of the same passages in essay 3 of *Interpretation and Social Criticism* as he does in "Nation and Universe".
- ⁸⁵⁹ Published in the *Journal of Religious Ethics*, vol. 20 (1992), 215-228.
- ⁸⁶⁰ Published in the *Yale Journal of Law and the Humanities*, vol. 4 (1992), 335-349.

⁸⁶¹ See M. Walzer, "Moral Minimalism" in *From the Twilight of Probability: Ethics and Politics*, ed. W. R. Shea and A. Spadafora, (Canton, Mass: Watson Publishing International, Science History Publications, 1992) pp. 3-14. This article is an earlier draft of the first chapter of *Thick and Thin*.

⁸⁶² I will cite the version of "Justice Here and Now" reprinted in *Thinking Politically* (pp. 68-80). This quote is from p. 69.

⁸⁶³ Walzer, "Justice Here and Now," p. 69.

⁸⁶⁴ Walzer, "The Long-Term Perspective," p. 11.

⁸⁶⁵ Walzer, "The Long-Term Perspective", p. 10. On p. 9, Walzer notes that this argument "elaborates" on an analogy that he "sketched even more briefly in my book *Spheres of Justice*".

⁸⁶⁶ Walzer, "The Long-Term Perspective", p. 10.

⁸⁶⁷ Walzer, "The Long-Term Perspective", p. 11.

⁸⁶⁸ We will consider this critical commentary in chapter 5, when discussing *Pluralism, Justice, and Equality*.

⁸⁶⁹ Walzer, "Justice Here and Now," p. 76.

⁸⁷⁰ Walzer starts "Justice Here and Now" by describing exactly what he takes to be the relationship between philosophy and politics and the reason why Reagonomics cannot be the correct account of American shared understandings: "philosophy reflects and articulates the political culture of its time, and politics presents and enacts the arguments of philosophy...Philosophy is politics reflected upon in tranquility, and politics is philosophy acted out in confusion" (p. 68). He goes on to argue that "market ideology is a highly distorted reflection of our political culture, ignoring or repressing examples of communal cooperation and state action and denying the significance of political struggles for public health, industrial democracy, workplace safety, environmental control, and so on. And laissez-faire politics has taken the form of a crude attack on the welfare state, leaving the large-scale public subsidy of capitalist enterprise untouched" (pp. 68-69). Shared understandings are, in other words, the product of the history of a particular political culture and not the result of a national vote or series of such votes.

⁸⁷¹ Walzer, "Justice Here and Now," p. 73.

⁸⁷² Walzer, "Justice Here and Now," p. 69.

⁸⁷³ Walzer, "Justice Here and Now," p. 71.

⁸⁷⁴ Walzer, "Justice Here and Now," pp. 74-76.

⁸⁷⁵ Walzer, "Justice Here and Now," pp. 76-77.

⁸⁷⁶ Walzer, "Justice Here and Now," p. 79.

⁸⁷⁷ Walzer, "Justice Here and Now," p. 79.

⁸⁷⁸ Walzer, "Justice Here and Now," p. 74.

⁸⁷⁹ Walzer, "Justice Here and Now," p. 74.

⁸⁸⁰ Walzer, "Justice Here and Now," p. 75. Later on the same page, Walzer makes the stronger claim that "Equality of opportunity won't work unless the slope is flattened."

⁸⁸¹ Walzer, "Justice Here and Now," p. 76.

⁸⁸² Walzer, "Justice Here and Now," p. 79. Both the bold emphasis and the italics have been added.

⁸⁸³ Walzer, "Justice Here and Now," p. 79.

⁸⁸⁴ Walzer, "Justice Here and Now," p. 80.

⁸⁸⁵ Walzer, "Justice Here and Now," p. 80. Again, emphasis added.

⁸⁸⁶ Walzer makes a similar point at the end of "The Long-Term Perspective," when he says that, "It is not the case that answers drop out of the political theory of democratic citizenship like eggs from a chicken. Would that it were. And yet there have to be democratic answers. Or, at least, there have to be democratic ways to approve or disapprove of answers first formulated by experts and professionals." (p. 13).

⁸⁸⁷ Walzer, "The Long-Term Perspective," p. 14.

⁸⁸⁸ Walzer, "Toward a Theory of Social Assignments," p. 81. This article was also published in 1986, like "Justice Here and Now" and "The Long-Term Perspective."

⁸⁸⁹ Walzer, "Toward a Theory of Social Assignments," p. 94. Walzer argues that, "each ideology describes its own sector as if it were self-sufficient and potentially all-encompassing. But all such claims

are false. One quick way of revealing their falsehood is to list the victims of each sector when it stands alone, with no balancing activity from any other.”

⁸⁹⁰ M. Walzer, “The Civil Society Argument,” in *Theorizing Citizenship*, ed. R. Beiner (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp. 153-174. See chapter 5 of the thesis for further details.

⁸⁹¹ Walzer, “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments,” p. 79; Walzer, “Socializing the Welfare State,” p. 18.

⁸⁹² Walzer, “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments,” pp. 80, 90-93.

⁸⁹³ Walzer, “Socializing the Welfare State,” p. 18.

⁸⁹⁴ Walzer, “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments,” p. 80.

⁸⁹⁵ Walzer, “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments,” p. 79.

⁸⁹⁶ Walzer, “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments,” p. 80.

⁸⁹⁷ Walzer, “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments,” pp. 80-81.

⁸⁹⁸ Walzer, “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments,” p. 81.

⁸⁹⁹ Walzer, “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments,” pp. 82-83.

⁹⁰⁰ Walzer, “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments,” pp. 83-84.

⁹⁰¹ Walzer, “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments,” pp. 84-90. Walzer states that when considering the state sector, he sometimes has in mind “the political community” but maintains that, nonetheless, his argument does not “commit” him to “any strong version of communitarianism” because there are “many different sorts of political community, some of them, like ours, very loosely structured.”

⁹⁰² Walzer, “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments,” p. 85.

⁹⁰³ Walzer, “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments,” pp. 86-87.

⁹⁰⁴ Walzer, “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments,” p. 88. Note the recurrence of the sphere of recognition from *Spheres*.

⁹⁰⁵ Walzer, “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments,” p. 90.

⁹⁰⁶ Walzer, “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments,” p. 90.

⁹⁰⁷ Walzer, “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments,” pp. 90-91.

⁹⁰⁸ Walzer, “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments,” p. 92.

⁹⁰⁹ Walzer, “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments,” p. 92.

⁹¹⁰ Walzer, “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments,” p. 95.

⁹¹¹ Walzer, “Socializing the Welfare State,” p. 13.

⁹¹² Walzer, “Socializing the Welfare State,” p. 13.

⁹¹³ Walzer, “Socializing the Welfare State,” p. 15.

⁹¹⁴ Walzer, “Socializing the Welfare State,” p. 15.

⁹¹⁵ Walzer, “Socializing the Welfare State,” p. 16.

⁹¹⁶ Walzer, “Socializing the Welfare State,” p. 16.

⁹¹⁷ Walzer, “Socializing the Welfare State,” p. 17.

⁹¹⁸ Walzer, “Socializing the Welfare State,” pp. 17-21.

⁹¹⁹ Walzer, “Socializing the Welfare State,” p. 21.

⁹²⁰ Walzer, “Socializing the Welfare State,” p. 23.

⁹²¹ Walzer, “Socializing the Welfare State,” pp. 23-24.

⁹²² Walzer, “Socializing the Welfare State,” p. 24. C.f. Walzer’s arguments about political education.

⁹²³ Walzer, “Socializing the Welfare State,” p. 26.

⁹²⁴ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. vii.

⁹²⁵ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. vii.

⁹²⁶ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. viii. That said, the location of the symposium is barely reflected in the acknowledgements to *Interpretation*, in which Walzer thanks those members of the Harvard faculty who gave him the most perspicuous criticism – Martha Minnow, Michael Sandel, Thomas Scanlon, Judith Shklar, and Lloyd Weinreb – as well as colleagues at the Institute for Advanced Study, such as Clifford Geertz, Don Herzog, Michael Rustin, and Alan Wertheimer. It is perhaps

surprising that Robert Nozick, Walzer's long-time friend and a then member of the Harvard faculty, is not mentioned in that list.

⁹²⁷ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 3.

⁹²⁸ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 3.

⁹²⁹ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 4. On p. 5, Walzer gives an account of the secular variant of the path of discovery: "a philosopher who reports to us on the existence of natural law, say, or natural rights or any set of objective moral truths has walked the path of discovery...likely, given the standard form of the philosophical enterprise, [his or her] search [for those moral truths has been] internal, mental, a matter of detachment and reflection. The moral world comes into view as the philosopher steps back in his mind from his social position."

⁹³⁰ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 5. C.f. T. Nagel, *The View from Nowhere*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986 and "The Limits of Objectivity" in *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, vol. 1 (Salt Lake City: Utah University Press, 1980).

⁹³¹ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 5.

⁹³² Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 4.

⁹³³ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 7.

⁹³⁴ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 6.

⁹³⁵ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 7.

⁹³⁶ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 8.

⁹³⁷ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, pp. 9-11.

⁹³⁸ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, pp. 11-13.

⁹³⁹ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 9.

⁹⁴⁰ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 10.

⁹⁴¹ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 11. This is a point that Walzer had already made in *Spheres*.

⁹⁴² Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 12.

⁹⁴³ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 13.

⁹⁴⁴ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 13.

⁹⁴⁵ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 13. It is worth noting that, unlike in *Spheres*, Walzer here adds the caveat that the caricature is aimed "at Rawls's epigones rather than at Rawls himself." The difference is probably caused by the publication of Rawls's article, "Justice as Fairness: Political Not Metaphysical" in between the publication of *Spheres* and that of *Interpretation*.

⁹⁴⁶ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 14. C.f. "Philosophy and Democracy."

⁹⁴⁷ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, pp. 14-15.

⁹⁴⁸ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 16.

⁹⁴⁹ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 16.

⁹⁵⁰ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 18. In the case of the inventor, this is because of the reliance on intuition in, for example, Rawls's reflective equilibrium.

⁹⁵¹ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 17.

⁹⁵² Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 19.

⁹⁵³ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 20.

⁹⁵⁴ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 21.

⁹⁵⁵ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 21.

⁹⁵⁶ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, pp. 22-23.

⁹⁵⁷ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism* p. 23.

⁹⁵⁸ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 24.

⁹⁵⁹ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 24.

⁹⁶⁰ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 25.

⁹⁶¹ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 25.

⁹⁶² Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 26. On pp. 27-28, Walzer explains why this is using the example of Rawls's difference principle and the interpretive controversy about how egalitarian it is. He argues that there is "no definitive way of ending the disagreement. But the best account of the difference principle would be one that rendered it coherent with other American values – equal protection, equal opportunity, political liberty, individualism – and connected it to some plausible view of incentives and productivity."

⁹⁶³ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, pp. 26-27. C.f. T. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

⁹⁶⁴ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 29. This is, presumably, why political education is so important in Walzer's eyes.

⁹⁶⁵ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 30.

⁹⁶⁶ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, pp. 30-32.

⁹⁶⁷ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 32. The point is that "Morality... is something we have to argue about. The argument implies common possession, but common possession does not imply agreement. There is a tradition, a body of moral knowledge; and there is this group of sages, arguing. There isn't anything else."

⁹⁶⁸ However, we should remember that in *Radical Principles*, Walzer rejected the distinction between substance and procedure.

⁹⁶⁹ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 32. Here best must be taken to imply "most persuasive." There is no other form of best. If "best" implied technical skill in interpretation, we should most likely have to conclude that Rabbi Eliezer had the best of the arguments.

⁹⁷⁰ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 35.

⁹⁷¹ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 36.

⁹⁷² Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 37.

⁹⁷³ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 37. As he frequently points out, why should detached figures take the time and energy to criticize a particular society?

⁹⁷⁴ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 39.

⁹⁷⁵ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, pp. 39-40.

⁹⁷⁶ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 40.

⁹⁷⁷ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 41.

⁹⁷⁸ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 43.

⁹⁷⁹ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 43.

⁹⁸⁰ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 44.

⁹⁸¹ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 46.

⁹⁸² Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 46. C.f. Thomas Scanlon's discussion of the "desire to be able to justify [our] actions to others on grounds they could not reasonably reject" (p. 46). T. Scanlon, "Contractualism and Utilitarianism," in *Utilitarianism and Beyond*, ed. A. Sen and B. Williams, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 116.

⁹⁸³ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 47.

⁹⁸⁴ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, pp. 47-48. According to Walzer, this argument can be made at the levels of individual and collective life, because every society has some form of morality.

⁹⁸⁵ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 49.

⁹⁸⁶ The argument that follows closely mirrors a similar argument made about self-criticism in Walzer's "Notes on Self-Criticism," *Social Research*, vol. 54 (1987), 33-43. In this article, Walzer makes a "pluralist or democratic correction" (37) of the received wisdom about how to conduct self-criticism akin to his defense of social criticism. Contrary to both psychoanalysis and philosophy, there is, says Walzer, "no hierarchy" (42) between id and superego (34-36) or between critical I and engaged self (37-39). Rather, the "self is better imagined as a circle, with me in the center surrounded by my self-critics who stand at different temporal and spatial removes... Criticism incorporated is the steady accessory of action in the world." (42). Both the distanced self, such as Harry Truman who claims never to have lost a night's

sleep about deploying the atom bomb, and the dominated self, who always worries about the same thing, both fail to practice self-criticism in the pluralist, democratic mode. Appropriately understood, according to Walzer, “The democracy of criticism saves me from the harshness and persistence of a single supercritical” (43).

⁹⁸⁷ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 49.

⁹⁸⁸ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 50.

⁹⁸⁹ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 51.

⁹⁹⁰ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 52. Hence, for example, John Locke’s defense of religious toleration was not made in the isolation of exile. Rather, Locke’s exile from England “tied him more closely than ever before to the political forces fighting against Stuart ‘tyranny’” (p. 53), by committing him to a cause. In an argument that echoes Rawls’s introduction to *Political Liberalism*, Walzer notes that toleration has usually resulted from “exhaustion” rather than from dispassion (p. 54).

⁹⁹¹ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 55. Walzer is therefore highly critical of Marxism on the grounds that “neither Marx himself nor any of his chief intellectual followers ever worked out a moral and political theory of socialism” (p. 56). This was because the class struggle was theorized as a war and social criticism rejected because it assumed some sort of collective life, the existence of which Marxists denied. Social criticism cannot function in a war to the death. Walzer argues that, “Marx would have done better to take seriously his own metaphorical account of the new society growing in the womb of the old” (p. 57).

⁹⁹² Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, pp. 59-60.

⁹⁹³ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 60.

⁹⁹⁴ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, pp. 60-61.

⁹⁹⁵ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 64.

⁹⁹⁶ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 64.

⁹⁹⁷ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 69.

⁹⁹⁸ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 69.

⁹⁹⁹ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 70.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 71.

¹⁰⁰¹ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 71.

¹⁰⁰² It is therefore the nature of Judaism that made social criticism possible in Israel, as it was not in Egypt or Assyria. Walzer notes that the Jewish priests had a weaker influence on everyday life (p. 72).

¹⁰⁰³ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 72.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, pp. 73-77.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 79.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 80.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Here is another parallel to *Exodus and Revolution*: Egyptian oppression is taken by Walzer to have been primarily political, and later Israelite and Judean oppression to have been predominantly economic. See *Interpretation*, p. 86, and *Exodus and Revolution*, chapter 3.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 82.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 87. A more succinct account of why Amos in particular was a social critic is given on p. 89: “Amos’s prophecy is social criticism because it challenges the leaders, the conventions, the ritual practices of a particular society and because it does so in the name of values recognized and shared in that same society.”

¹⁰¹⁰ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 93.

¹⁰¹¹ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, p. 94. Reiteration will become the major theme of “Nation and Universe”.

¹⁰¹² Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, pp. 7-8. For example, Michel Foucault – for all the alienation of his rhetoric – was a professor at the College de France, and Herbert Marcuse worked for the Office of Strategic Services.

¹⁰¹³ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. 26.

¹⁰¹⁴ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. 191.

¹⁰¹⁵ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. 209.

¹⁰¹⁶ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. x.

¹⁰¹⁷ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. 3.

¹⁰¹⁸ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. 3.

¹⁰¹⁹ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. 4.

¹⁰²⁰ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. 12.

¹⁰²¹ Another difference between the two books relates to age. Whereas in *Interpretation*, Walzer had pointed out the (blatantly obvious) fact that both old and young are in a certain sense marginalized in a society that is dominated by the middle-aged, in *Company* he makes the mistake of making a simple binary opposition between old and young. This forces him into the conclusion that Simone de Beauvoir “recognized” that the elderly were “victims of a society fixated on youth, power, and efficiency” (p. 154). The Walzer of *Interpretation* ought to have had the good sense to amend that list of societal fixations to “middle age, power” etc.

¹⁰²² Walzer, *The Company of Critics* pp. 3-8.

¹⁰²³ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. 9.

¹⁰²⁴ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. 16.

¹⁰²⁵ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. 19. I take this to imply also that criticism can always be radical.

¹⁰²⁶ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. 21.

¹⁰²⁷ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. 22.

¹⁰²⁸ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. 23.

¹⁰²⁹ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, pp. 24-28. “Deprivation” is referred to on p. 27.

¹⁰³⁰ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. 26. We might say “in but not of” the company.

¹⁰³¹ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, pp. 29-44.

¹⁰³² Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, pp. 210-224.

¹⁰³³ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, pp. 45-63.

¹⁰³⁴ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, pp. 64-79.

¹⁰³⁵ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, pp. 80-100 and 101-116.

¹⁰³⁶ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, pp. 117-135.

¹⁰³⁷ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, pp. 136-152.

¹⁰³⁸ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, pp. 153-169.

¹⁰³⁹ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, pp. 170-190.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, pp. 191-209.

¹⁰⁴¹ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. 169.

¹⁰⁴² Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. 165.

¹⁰⁴³ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, pp. 166-168.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, pp. 187-190.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. 224.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. 223.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. 221. C.f. p. 150: “Camus remained what he was: a pied noir writer.” The same is said of Orwell on p. 121: “Orwell was faithful to what he was, as if following the moral injunction that Albert Camus later made the maxim of his own politics during the Algerian war. He did resign from the Burmese police, and he did become a socialist, but he did both these things without renouncing his ‘tastes and beliefs.’”

¹⁰⁴⁸ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. 151.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. 151.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. 151.

¹⁰⁵¹ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. 150.

¹⁰⁵² Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. 152.

¹⁰⁵³ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. 238.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. 224. The second quote is directly from Breytenbach, the first is paraphrased. The Breytenbach quote was originally in B. Breytenbach, *End Papers: Essays, Letters, Articles of Faith, Workbook Notes*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1986), p. 76.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, pp. 239-240.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, pp. 229-233.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. 231.

¹⁰⁵⁸ We should note that many of the chapters of *Company* were also published separately, for example “The Critic in Exile: Breyten Breytenbach and South Africa,” *Dissent*, spring 1989, 177-185, and “The Politics of the Intellectual: Julien Benda’s La Trahison des Clercs Reconsidered,” in *Conflict and Consensus: A Festschrift in Honor of Lewis A. Coser*, ed. W. W. Powell and R. Robbins, (New York: Macmillan, 1984), pp. 365-377.

¹⁰⁵⁹ M. Walzer, “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation,” in his *Thinking Politically*, p. 22. The article was originally published in the *Philosophical Forum*, vol. 21, (1989-1990), 182-196. I have elsewhere objected to Walzer’s reading of Plato in the article. See T. Reiner, “Texts as Performances: How to Reconstruct Webs of Beliefs from Expressed Utterances,” *Journal of the Philosophy of History*, vol. 3 (2009), 266-289.

¹⁰⁶⁰ All of the above three quotes are found on page 36 of *Thinking Politically*.

¹⁰⁶¹ Walzer, “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation,” p. 22.

¹⁰⁶² Walzer, “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation,” p. 23.

¹⁰⁶³ Walzer, “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation,” p. 23.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Walzer, “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation,” p. 23.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Walzer, “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation,” p. 24. Walzer also points out that such a conversation is more like a political debate, which ends in a vote. After the vote, those on the losing side do not concede that the decision was right but only that it is the right one to enforce at the moment.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Walzer, “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation,” p. 25.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Walzer, “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation,” p. 25.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Walzer, “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation,” pp. 25-28.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Walzer, “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation,” p. 28.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Walzer, “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation,” p. 28.

¹⁰⁷¹ Walzer, “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation,” p. 29.

¹⁰⁷² Walzer, “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation,” p. 29.

¹⁰⁷³ Walzer, “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation,” p. 30.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Walzer, “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation,” p. 31.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Walzer, “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation,” pp. 32-33.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Walzer, “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation,” p. 33.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Walzer, “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation,” p. 33. As Walzer points out, “The actual process through which the idea of a career came to be central to our self-understanding has its beginning in the breakup of traditional communities; it is the product of force and fraud as much as of philosophical argument. And yet, today, we can hardly begin a philosophical argument about social arrangements or theories of justice without assuming the existence of individuals who plan their lives.”

¹⁰⁷⁸ Walzer, “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation,” p. 35.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Walzer, “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation,” p. 35.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Walzer, “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation,” p. 35.

¹⁰⁸¹ Walzer, “A Critique of Philosophical Conversation,” p. 36.

¹⁰⁸² Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 96.

¹⁰⁸³ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 112.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 101.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 96.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 96.

¹⁰⁸⁷ It is worth noting that Walzer adds that social democracy is also vulnerable to communitarian critique, albeit to a lesser extent than liberalism. Unlike liberalism, social democracy “sponsors certain sorts of communal identification” (pp. 96-97). With liberalism, it shares “a commitment to economic growth and [copes]...with the deracinated social forms that growth produces.” On this account, communitarianism is at least skeptical about economic growth.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 97.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 97.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 99.

¹⁰⁹¹ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 98. But as Walzer points out in a footnote, such communitarians normally take Hobbes and Sartre as their principal targets. That is odd considering that neither man was really a liberal at all (p. 112).

¹⁰⁹² Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 98.

¹⁰⁹³ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 99.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 100.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 100.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 100.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 101.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” pp. 101-102.

¹⁰⁹⁹ The last four sentences summarize pp. 101-102.

¹¹⁰⁰ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 103.

¹¹⁰¹ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 103.

¹¹⁰² Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 103.

¹¹⁰³ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 103.

¹¹⁰⁴ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 104.

¹¹⁰⁵ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 104.

¹¹⁰⁶ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 104.

¹¹⁰⁷ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 105.

¹¹⁰⁸ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 105.

¹¹⁰⁹ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” pp. 105-106. This will become a major theme in *Politics and Passion*.

¹¹¹⁰ Free riding was also a major topic in “A Day in the Life of a Socialist Citizen.”

¹¹¹¹ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 106.

¹¹¹² Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 107.

¹¹¹³ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 107.

¹¹¹⁴ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 107.

¹¹¹⁵ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” pp. 107-108. Perhaps Walzer’s most characteristic example is the second one, in which he repeats the claim made in *Spheres*, in “Justice Here and Now,” and in “The Long-Term Perspective” that the liberal state can use tax money to help religious groups to provide welfare services. This would mean “welfare societies inside the welfare-state” (p. 108). C.f. “Socializing the Welfare State”. The third example is of states protecting local communities through such measures as plant-closing laws.

¹¹¹⁶ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 109.

¹¹¹⁷ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 109.

¹¹¹⁸ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 110. In the second edition of *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, Michael Sandel claims that his argument is best seen not as being communitarian but as teleological or perfectionist. It might perhaps also be described as republican.

¹¹¹⁹ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 110.

¹¹²⁰ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” pp. 110-111. Thus, “respect for tradition requires the precariousness of traditionalism.”

¹¹²¹ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 111.

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- ¹¹²² Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” p. 111.
- ¹¹²³ Walzer, “Nation and Universe,” in *Thinking Politically*, p. 183.
- ¹¹²⁴ Walzer, “Nation and Universe,” p. 186.
- ¹¹²⁵ Walzer, “Nation and Universe,” p. 190. On this occasion, Walzer explains, “it is entirely possible to inherit a life and still possess it as one’s own.”
- ¹¹²⁶ Walzer, “Nation and Universe,” p. 191.
- ¹¹²⁷ Walzer, “Nation and Universe,” p. 184.
- ¹¹²⁸ Walzer, “Nation and Universe,” p. 185.
- ¹¹²⁹ Walzer, “Nation and Universe,” p. 186.
- ¹¹³⁰ Walzer, “Nation and Universe,” p. 186.
- ¹¹³¹ Walzer, “Nation and Universe,” p. 188.
- ¹¹³² Walzer, “Nation and Universe,” p. 189.
- ¹¹³³ Walzer, “Nation and Universe,” p. 190.
- ¹¹³⁴ Walzer, “Nation and Universe,” p. 191.
- ¹¹³⁵ Walzer, “Nation and Universe,” p. 195.
- ¹¹³⁶ Walzer, “Nation and Universe,” p. 195.
- ¹¹³⁷ Walzer, “Nation and Universe,” p. 196.
- ¹¹³⁸ Walzer, “Nation and Universe,” p. 196.
- ¹¹³⁹ Walzer, “Nation and Universe,” p. 198.
- ¹¹⁴⁰ Walzer, “Nation and Universe,” p. 199.
- ¹¹⁴¹ Walzer, “Nation and Universe,” p. 200.
- ¹¹⁴² Walzer, “Nation and Universe,” p. 201. Literally, “We act immorally whenever we deny to other people the warrant for or what I will now call the rights of reiteration, that is, the right to act autonomously and the right to form attachments in accordance with a particular understanding of the good life.” Understood individually, that sentence could be straight out of a liberal’s account of morality.
- ¹¹⁴³ Walzer, “Nation and Universe,” p. 206.
- ¹¹⁴⁴ Walzer, “Nation and Universe,” p. 206.
- ¹¹⁴⁵ Walzer, “Nation and Universe,” p. 207.
- ¹¹⁴⁶ Walzer, “Nation and Universe,” p. 208.
- ¹¹⁴⁷ Walzer, “Nation and Universe,” p. 209.
- ¹¹⁴⁸ Walzer defends a similar position – essentially that oppression is the cause of wars of national liberation and that peace will arrive when nations are set free – in “The Reform of the International System.”
- ¹¹⁴⁹ Walzer, “Nation and Universe,” p. 211. The difference being, for Walzer, that egoism ranks selves and individualism does not.
- ¹¹⁵⁰ Walzer, “Nation and Universe,” p. 213.
- ¹¹⁵¹ Walzer, *What It Means to be an American*, p. 3.
- ¹¹⁵² I will not touch on the content of “Civility” here and refer the reader back to chapter 2 and the section on *Radical Principles* for a discussion of it.
- ¹¹⁵³ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 89.
- ¹¹⁵⁴ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 101.
- ¹¹⁵⁵ As noted above, Walzer’s article is on pp. 781-787.
- ¹¹⁵⁶ M. Walzer, “What Does It Mean to Be an ‘American’?” *Social Research*, vol. 57 (1990), 591-614.
- ¹¹⁵⁷ Walzer, *What It Means to be an American*, p. 125.
- ¹¹⁵⁸ Robert E. Calvert, ed, “*The Constitution of the People*”: *Reflections on Citizens and Civil Society*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991). Walzer’s article is on pp. 113-126.
- ¹¹⁵⁹ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 3.
- ¹¹⁶⁰ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 3.
- ¹¹⁶¹ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 4.

¹¹⁶² Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 4. Walzer stipulates however that the “sequence is by no means inevitable.” Societies could go from articulation to war and then to permanent division and it could be argued that incorporation really begins the sequence as well as ending it. Nonetheless, the moments have “a certain normative logic. If they aren’t a literal summary of our experience, they are at least an expression of our hopes.”

¹¹⁶³ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 4.

¹¹⁶⁴ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 5.

¹¹⁶⁵ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 5.

¹¹⁶⁶ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 6.

¹¹⁶⁷ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 6. These limits can be either domestic (such as the divide between church and state) or international (borders).

¹¹⁶⁸ Walzer, *What It Means*, pp. 6-7.

¹¹⁶⁹ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 7.

¹¹⁷⁰ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 7.

¹¹⁷¹ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 8.

¹¹⁷² Walzer, *What It Means*, pp. 9-12.

¹¹⁷³ Walzer, *What It Means*, pp. 12-16.

¹¹⁷⁴ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 10.

¹¹⁷⁵ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 11.

¹¹⁷⁶ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 13.

¹¹⁷⁷ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 14.

¹¹⁷⁸ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 16. However, some might think that Walzer’s insistence on accommodating difference is contradicted by his reiteration of the argument from Spheres that nation-states will “favor immigrants who resemble themselves and seem likely to blend into the established culture” (p. 14). Walzer does on this occasion water down that argument by acknowledging that debates about immigration in Europe are often xenophobic or racist and by insisting that those who wish to restrict immigration should be asked how they intend to treat ethnic minorities and assist the countries from which immigrants originate (p. 15). Furthermore, he implies that in the USA and other immigrant societies it is illegitimate to restrict immigration on the grounds of affinity.

¹¹⁷⁹ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 16.

¹¹⁸⁰ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 17.

¹¹⁸¹ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 17.

¹¹⁸² Walzer, *What It Means*, pp. 17-18.

¹¹⁸³ Walzer, *What It Means*, pp. 18-19.

¹¹⁸⁴ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 49.

¹¹⁸⁵ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 57.

¹¹⁸⁶ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 65.

¹¹⁸⁷ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 64.

¹¹⁸⁸ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 65. There is an interesting comparison between this argument and the claim in *The Company of Critics* that abstractions have a lesser power to motivate people than do concrete identities.

¹¹⁸⁹ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 66.

¹¹⁹⁰ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 66.

¹¹⁹¹ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 76. I would have thought that Mexican-Americans were an ethnic minority, and so I am not sure exactly how Walzer distinguishes between ethnic and racial minorities. Perhaps there is no clear dividing line and that is why Walzer is not sure whether Mexican-Americans will share the Indian and black problem of identification.

¹¹⁹² Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 77.

¹¹⁹³ There is one other important similarity between “What Does It Mean?” and “Pluralism”. Each of these articles refers to the fact that in America’s immigrant communities there are a small number of

active participants and a “much larger periphery of individuals and families who are little more than occasional recipients of services generated at the center” (p. 70). In other words, ethnic communities do not have boundaries around them. For the reference in “What Does It Mean,” see p. 48: “At the core, the left side of the (double) hyphen is stronger; along the periphery, the right side is stronger, though never fully dominant.” The hyphen in question is that of Ethnic-American identity. Walzer asserts that the core members of ethnic minorities identify themselves as ethnic first, and American later, while the periphery do the reverse.

There is also a parallel between these arguments about core and periphery and similar ones made in *Political Action* with regard to movement politics.

¹¹⁹⁴ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 105.

¹¹⁹⁵ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 106.

¹¹⁹⁶ Walzer, *What It Means*, pp. 105-106. Walzer makes a similar argument in “The Constitution and Social Change: A Comment.”

¹¹⁹⁷ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 107.

¹¹⁹⁸ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 108. Walzer goes on to argue that the common view of the bill as protecting property as the “original right” (p. 109) is incorrect because self-ownership as a ground for property rights depends on the prior “moral self-possession of Protestant men and women.” Furthermore, the “unencumbered self” of liberalism “bears in its original form the encumbrances of divinity.

¹¹⁹⁹ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 111.

¹²⁰⁰ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 111.

¹²⁰¹ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 112.

¹²⁰² Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 113.

¹²⁰³ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 114.

¹²⁰⁴ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 115.

¹²⁰⁵ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 115.

¹²⁰⁶ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 113. Furthermore, “those who already have resources are likely to be constitutionally entitled to them.”

¹²⁰⁷ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 117.

¹²⁰⁸ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 118.

¹²⁰⁹ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 118.

¹²¹⁰ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 118.

¹²¹¹ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 121.

¹²¹² Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 122.

¹²¹³ Walzer, *What It Means*, pp. 123-124.

¹²¹⁴ A version of which had appeared earlier in DeCosse, ed, *But was it Just?*

¹²¹⁵ M. Walzer, “Perplexed: Moral Ambiguities in the Gulf Crisis,” *New Republic*, 204 (January 1991), 13-15.

¹²¹⁶ Walzer, “Perplexed,” 13, *But Was it Just?*, pp. 4-5.

¹²¹⁷ Walzer, “Perplexed,” 14-15, *But Was it Just?*, pp. 8-15.

¹²¹⁸ Walzer, “Perplexed,” 14, *But Was it Just?*, pp. 5-7.

¹²¹⁹ The copy of “Emergency Ethics” that is easiest to obtain is in J. Carl Ficarrotta, ed, *The Leader’s Imperative: ethics, integrity, and responsibility*, (Purdue University Press, Purdue, 2001), pp. 126-139. The book, which is a collection of various lectures given as the Joseph A. Reich lectures, is available on Google books.

¹²²⁰ Walzer, *Emergency Ethics*, p. 127. It is worth noting in passing that Walzer adds one of his characteristic barbs at philosophy as traditionally practiced when he says that it is precisely this that has made the notion of the emergency controversial, because philosophers dislike the appearance of internal contradiction that is implied by the claim that something can be the right thing to do and yet also be wrong. Indeed, Athmeya Jayaram calls it a “terrible argument” for precisely this reason.

¹²²¹ Walzer, *Emergency Ethics*, p. 134.

- ¹²²² Walzer, *Emergency Ethics*, p. 138.
- ¹²²³ Walzer, *Emergency Ethics*, pp. 135-136.
- ¹²²⁴ Walzer, "Terrorism: A Critique of Excuses." It is worth noting that in the article that follows Walzer's, Robert K. Fullinwider does attempt a possible defense of terrorism in some situations and argues that Walzer fails to define his terms sufficiently. See his "Understanding Terrorism," pp. 248-259. Furthermore, Walzer also published sections from *Just and Unjust Wars* in the Luper-Foy book under the title "The Theory of Aggression," pp. 151-181. As that simply reproduces material already considered in the discussion of *Just and Unjust Wars*, I will say nothing more about it here.
- ¹²²⁵ Walzer, "Terrorism," pp. 240-241.
- ¹²²⁶ Walzer, "Terrorism," p. 239.
- ¹²²⁷ Walzer, "Terrorism," pp. 242-246.
- ¹²²⁸ M. Walzer, "The Idea of Holy War in Ancient Israel," *Journal of Religious Ethics*, vol. 20 (1992), 215. Note also that he starts the abstract of the article by referring to the idea of holy war as "morally offensive" and that the argument of the article is that the notion sits alongside another idea, namely of limited war, in the Biblical account.
- ¹²²⁹ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, p. ix: "I take this response seriously, take it to heart, indeed, since I don't mean to turn my own work into an apology for this (or any other) society."
- ¹²³⁰ Strictly speaking, the first half of the Talmud is the Mishna, in which the oral portion of the Jewish law was written down, and the second half is Gemora, in which that oral law is interpreted. However, any Talmud scholar knows that even the Mishna contains myriad debates on how to interpret Jewish law.
- ¹²³¹ M. Walzer, "Between Nation and World: Welcome to Some New Ideologies," *The Economist*, Special issue, 150 Economist Years (September 11, 1993), 51-54.
- ¹²³² M. Walzer, "The Concept of Civil Society," in *Toward a Global Civil Society*, ed. M. Walzer, (Providence, R. I. and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1995), p. 7. This article (pp. 7-27) was originally published as M. Walzer, "The Idea of Civil Society: A Path to Social Reconstruction," *Dissent* (Spring 1991), 293-304, and had earlier been given as the Gunner Myrdal lecture at the University of Stockholm in October 1990.
- ¹²³³ M. Walzer, "The New Tribalism: Notes on a Difficult Problem," *Dissent*, (Spring 1992), 164-171.
- ¹²³⁴ Walzer, "The Concept of Civil Society," pp. 7-8.
- ¹²³⁵ Walzer, "Socializing the Welfare State," pp. 17-18.
- ¹²³⁶ Walzer, "The Concept of Civil Society," pp. 7-8.
- ¹²³⁷ Walzer, "Toward a Theory of Social Assignments," p. 80.
- ¹²³⁸ Walzer, "The Concept of Civil Society," p. 8.
- ¹²³⁹ Walzer, "Toward a Theory of Social Assignments," pp. 81-83.
- ¹²⁴⁰ Walzer, "Socializing the Welfare State," p. 26. C.f. "The Concept of Civil Society," pp. 21-25, the section entitled "Still a Role for the State."
- ¹²⁴¹ Walzer, "Socializing the Welfare State," pp. 21-25.
- ¹²⁴² Walzer, *What It Means to be an American*, pp. 13-14: "The relation of individuals to the state will be more direct in national than in multi-national settings; group mediations will be reduced in importance... The attachment [to the state] will seem almost natural... it is hard to imagine the French or Italian equivalent of an Americanization campaign... the existence of a majority nation will always make for a strong central state."
- ¹²⁴³ Walzer, *What It Means*, p. 18. Both italicized and bold emphasis added.
- ¹²⁴⁴ Walzer, "Citizenship."
- ¹²⁴⁵ Walzer, p. 218.
- ¹²⁴⁶ It is one of a select number of articles on the history of political thought that Walzer wrote during this time period. Another is "Good Aristocrats/Bad Aristocrats: Thomas Hobbes and Early Modern Political Culture," in *In the Presence of the Past: Essays in Honor of Frank Manuel*, ed. R. Bienvenu and M. Feingold, (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991) pp. 41-53. In that article, Walzer argues that Hobbes cannot be understood without being placed in "the larger world of European

moralists” of the 17th century (p. 45) and that Hobbes in fact affirmed the possibility of a “republic of moral agents” (p. 52) – in other words, of “good aristocrats” – at the same time as he denied it. Bearing in mind that much of Walzer’s early work – including both *The Revolution of the Saints* and *Regicide and Revolution* – was in the history of political thought, his turn away from it in the late 1980s is perhaps significant.

¹²⁴⁷ Walzer, “Citizenship,” p. 213.

¹²⁴⁸ Walzer, “Citizenship,” p. 213.

¹²⁴⁹ Walzer, “Citizenship,” p. 214.

¹²⁵⁰ Walzer, “Citizenship,” p. 217.

¹²⁵¹ Walzer, “Citizenship,” p. 218.

¹²⁵² Walzer, “Citizenship,” p. 212.

¹²⁵³ Walzer, “Justice Here and Now,” pp. 79-80.

¹²⁵⁴ Walzer, “Moral Minimalism,” p. 3.

¹²⁵⁵ Walzer, “Moral Minimalism,” p. 4.

¹²⁵⁶ Walzer, “Moral Minimalism,” pp. 9-10.

¹²⁵⁷ Walzer, “Moral Minimalism,” p. 14.

¹²⁵⁸ Walzer, *Thick and Thin* p. 2.

¹²⁵⁹ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, p. 3.

¹²⁶⁰ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, pp. 4-5.

¹²⁶¹ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, p. 5.

¹²⁶² For Walzer’s account of the My Lai massacre see *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 309-316.

¹²⁶³ See my discussion of Walzer’s account of why universal healthcare is a moral requirement in the USA in chapters 3 and 4 of this dissertation.

¹²⁶⁴ On this point, see *Thick and Thin*, pp. 41-61 and my discussion below.

¹²⁶⁵ For example, M. Walzer, “Fifty Years After Hiroshima,” *Dissent* (Summer 1995), 330-331, and M. Walzer, “Kosovo,” *Dissent* (Summer 1999), 5-7. An important piece that pre-dates *Thick and Thin* is Walzer, “Between Nation and World,” 51-54.

¹²⁶⁶ M. Walzer, *On Toleration*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 8-10. C.f. M. Walzer, “The Politics of Difference: Statehood and Toleration in a Multicultural World,” in *The Morality of Nationalism*, ed. R. McKim and J. McMahan, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 245-257, reprinted in M. Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, pp. 168-182.

¹²⁶⁷ M. Walzer, “Exclusion, Injustice, and the Democratic State,” *Dissent* (Winter 1993), pp. 55-64, reprinted in Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, pp. 81-95. See p. 87.

¹²⁶⁸ M. Walzer, “Multiculturalism and the Politics of Interest,” in *Insider/Outsider: American Jews and Multiculturalism*, ed. D. Biale, M. Galchinsky, and S. Heschel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 88-98. See also M. Walzer, “Blacks and Jews: A Personal Reflection,” in *Struggles in the Promised Land: Toward a History of Black-Jewish Relations in the United States*, ed. J. Salzman and C. West (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 409, and M. Walzer, “Michael Sandel’s America,” in *Debating Democracy’s Discontent: Essays on American Politics, Law, and Public Philosophy*, ed. A. Allen and M. Regan, Jr. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 181.

¹²⁶⁹ For Walzer’s views on the “welfare society” sitting alongside the welfare state, see the discussion of “Socializing the Welfare State” and “Toward a Theory of Social Assignments” in chapter 4 of this thesis. Walzer repeats the claim in “The Civil Society Argument,” in *Thinking Politically*, pp. 129-130.

¹²⁷⁰ M. Walzer, M. Lorberbaum, N. Zohar, and A. Ackerman, ed, *The Jewish Political Tradition, volume one: Authority*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000). See also M. Walzer, “Drawing the Line: Religion and Politics,” *Utah Law Review*, 1999, no. 3, 619-638, reprinted in *Thinking Politically*, pp. 147-167.

¹²⁷¹ The other is M. Walzer, “The Argument about Humanitarian Intervention,” *Dissent* (Winter 2002), 29-37.

¹²⁷² Walzer, “Exclusion, Injustice, and the Democratic State,” p. 82.

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- ¹²⁷³ Walzer, "Exclusion, Injustice, and the Democratic State," p. 82.
- ¹²⁷⁴ Walzer, "Exclusion, Injustice, and the Democratic State," pp. 85-86.
- ¹²⁷⁵ Walzer, "Exclusion, Injustice, and the Democratic State," p. 83.
- ¹²⁷⁶ Walzer, "Exclusion, Injustice, and the Democratic State," p. 84.
- ¹²⁷⁷ Walzer, "Exclusion, Injustice, and the Democratic State," p. 86.
- ¹²⁷⁸ Walzer, "Exclusion, Injustice, and the Democratic State," p. 83.
- ¹²⁷⁹ Walzer, "Exclusion, Injustice, and the Democratic State," pp. 90-91.
- ¹²⁸⁰ Walzer, "Exclusion, Injustice, and the Democratic State," pp. 92-93.
- ¹²⁸¹ Walzer, "Exclusion, Injustice, and the Democratic State," p. 93.
- ¹²⁸² Walzer, "Exclusion, Injustice, and the Democratic State," p. 94.
- ¹²⁸³ Walzer, "Exclusion, Injustice, and the Democratic State," p. 94. Walzer also reiterates his common claim that "many of the difficulties of excluded men and women are best handled within civil society" (p. 90), which would be another means of preventing the threat of overwhelming state power.
- ¹²⁸⁴ Walzer, "Objectivity and Social Meaning," p. 38.
- ¹²⁸⁵ For my discussion of "Philosophy and Democracy," see chapter 3. "A Critique of Philosophical Conversation" is discussed in chapter 4. They are the first two articles in *Thinking Politically*. "Objectivity and Social Meaning" is the third one, followed by "Liberalism and the Art of Separation" (also discussed in chapter 3).
- ¹²⁸⁶ Walzer, "Objectivity and Social Meaning," p. 38.
- ¹²⁸⁷ Walzer, "Objectivity and Social Meaning," pp. 38-39.
- ¹²⁸⁸ Walzer, "Objectivity and Social Meaning," pp. 39-40.
- ¹²⁸⁹ Walzer, "Objectivity and Social Meaning," p. 40.
- ¹²⁹⁰ Walzer, "Objectivity and Social Meaning," pp. 41-42.
- ¹²⁹¹ Walzer, "Objectivity and Social Meaning," p. 45.
- ¹²⁹² Walzer, "Objectivity and Social Meaning," pp. 45-46. This is, of course, a critique of projects such as those of Rawls and Habermas, which Walzer had earlier objected to in "A Critique of Philosophical Conversation."
- ¹²⁹³ Walzer, "Objectivity and Social Meaning," p. 46.
- ¹²⁹⁴ Walzer, "Objectivity and Social Meaning," p. 46.
- ¹²⁹⁵ Walzer, "Objectivity and Social Meaning," p. 47.
- ¹²⁹⁶ It is important to note that, before considering this hypothetical, Walzer points out its absurdity. Given what it means to be an object of exchange, he says, it is hard to believe that any women would agree to it. (p. 48). He explores the hypothetical simply for the sake of argument.
- ¹²⁹⁷ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, pp. 1-20.
- ¹²⁹⁸ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, pp. 21-40.
- ¹²⁹⁹ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, p. 21.
- ¹³⁰⁰ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, pp. 41-61.
- ¹³⁰¹ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, pp. 63-83.
- ¹³⁰² Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, pp. 85-104.
- ¹³⁰³ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, p. 3.
- ¹³⁰⁴ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, pp. 5-6.
- ¹³⁰⁵ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, p. 6.
- ¹³⁰⁶ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, p. 7.
- ¹³⁰⁷ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, p. 8.
- ¹³⁰⁸ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, p. 8.
- ¹³⁰⁹ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, p. 9. As Walzer points out, the most familiar of such standards is the contemporary language of rights – "our own moral maximalism" (p. 10).
- ¹³¹⁰ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, p. 17.
- ¹³¹¹ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, pp. 15-16.
- ¹³¹² Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, pp. 23-25.

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- ¹³¹³ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, p. 26.
- ¹³¹⁴ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, p. 28.
- ¹³¹⁵ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, p. 33.
- ¹³¹⁶ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, p. 39.
- ¹³¹⁷ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, p. 58.
- ¹³¹⁸ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, p. 60.
- ¹³¹⁹ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, pp. 60-61.
- ¹³²⁰ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, p. 67.
- ¹³²¹ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, p. 83.
- ¹³²² Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, p. 85.
- ¹³²³ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, p. 101.
- ¹³²⁴ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, pp. 102-103.
- ¹³²⁵ D. Miller and M. Walzer, ed, *Pluralism, Justice, and Equality*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).
- ¹³²⁶ Miller and Walzer, *Pluralism*, pp. 67-80.
- ¹³²⁷ Miller and Walzer, *Pluralism*, pp. 226-252.
- ¹³²⁸ Miller and Walzer, *Pluralism*, pp. 120-143.
- ¹³²⁹ Miller and Walzer, *Pluralism*, pp. 171-196.
- ¹³³⁰ Miller and Walzer, *Pluralism*, p. 281.
- ¹³³¹ Miller and Walzer, *Pluralism*, p. 283.
- ¹³³² Miller and Walzer, *Pluralism*, pp. 283-286.
- ¹³³³ Miller and Walzer, *Pluralism*, p. 292.
- ¹³³⁴ Miller and Walzer, *Pluralism*, pp. 286-288.
- ¹³³⁵ Miller and Walzer, *Pluralism*, pp. 292-293.
- ¹³³⁶ Miller and Walzer, *Pluralism*, pp. 293-295. This point is a response to the articles by Amy Gutmann and Jon Elster in *Pluralism*.
- ¹³³⁷ Miller and Walzer, *Pluralism*, pp. 295-296. To illustrate this point, Walzer discusses the concern Elster raises about exploitation of the welfare system, which Walzer says is today exemplified by the debate about whether “welfare mothers” should be forced or helped into work. The issue revolves around the social value of caring for children at home and the fulfillment that mothers might need to find in work outside the home as both individuals and citizens. It cannot be resolved by an argument about efficiency, because the values of work in the home and work outside the home cannot readily be made commensurable.
- ¹³³⁸ Miller and Walzer, *Pluralism*, p. 296.
- ¹³³⁹ Miller and Walzer, *Pluralism*, pp. 296-297.
- ¹³⁴⁰ Miller and Walzer, *Pluralism*, pp. 288-290. See J. Carens, “Complex Justice, Cultural Difference, and Political Community,” in *Pluralism, Justice, and Equality*, pp. 45-66.
- ¹³⁴¹ M. Walzer, “The Concept of Civil Society,” *Dissent* (Spring 1991); M. Walzer, “The Concept of Civil Society,” in *Toward a Global Civil Society*, ed. M. Walzer, (Providence, R. I.: Berghahn Books, 1995), pp. 7-27; M. Walzer, “The Civil Society Argument,” in *Theorizing Citizenship*, ed. R. Beiner, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp. 153-174. I cite the version in *Thinking Politically*.
- ¹³⁴² Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 115.
- ¹³⁴³ Walzer, *Toward a Global Civil Society*, p. 2.
- ¹³⁴⁴ Walzer, *Toward a Global Civil Society*, p. 2. See also Walzer, “Between Nation and World.”
- ¹³⁴⁵ Walzer, “The Civil Society Argument,” p. 116. C.f. Walzer, “Civility and Civic Virtue,” discussed in chapters 2 and 4 of this thesis.
- ¹³⁴⁶ Walzer, “The Civil Society Argument,” p. 123.
- ¹³⁴⁷ Walzer, “The Civil Society Argument,” pp. 116-123. The quote is from p. 123.
- ¹³⁴⁸ Walzer, “The Civil Society Argument,” p. 123.
- ¹³⁴⁹ Walzer, “The Civil Society Argument,” p. 129.

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- ¹³⁵⁰ Walzer, "The Civil Society Argument," p. 129.
- ¹³⁵¹ Walzer, "The Civil Society Argument," p. 133.
- ¹³⁵² Walzer, *Toward a Global Civil Society*, p. 3.
- ¹³⁵³ Walzer, "The Civil Society Argument," p. 130.
- ¹³⁵⁴ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. v.
- ¹³⁵⁵ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. xii.
- ¹³⁵⁶ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 6.
- ¹³⁵⁷ The phrase "regimes of toleration" recurs throughout *On Toleration* and is included in the title of chapter 2 ("Five Regimes of Toleration"), pp. 14-36.
- ¹³⁵⁸ Walzer, *On Toleration*, pp. xi-xii, 1-7.
- ¹³⁵⁹ Walzer, *On Toleration*, pp. 8-13.
- ¹³⁶⁰ Walzer, *On Toleration*, pp. 14-36.
- ¹³⁶¹ Walzer, *On Toleration*, pp. 37-51.
- ¹³⁶² Walzer, *On Toleration*, pp. 52-82.
- ¹³⁶³ Walzer, *On Toleration*, pp. 83-92.
- ¹³⁶⁴ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 93.
- ¹³⁶⁵ M. Walzer, "The Politics of Difference: Statehood and Toleration in a Multicultural World," in *The Morality of Nationalism*, ed. R. McKim and J. McMahan, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 245-257, reprinted in *Thinking Politically*, pp. 168-182.
- ¹³⁶⁶ Indeed, Walzer states in "The Politics of Difference" that there are four regimes of toleration (p. 170), although he does later mention international society as a regime even more tolerant of difference than multinational empires (p. 177).
- ¹³⁶⁷ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 14.
- ¹³⁶⁸ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 15.
- ¹³⁶⁹ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 16.
- ¹³⁷⁰ Walzer, *On Toleration*, pp. 17-18.
- ¹³⁷¹ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 21.
- ¹³⁷² Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 22.
- ¹³⁷³ Walzer, *On Toleration*, pp. 22-24.
- ¹³⁷⁴ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 25.
- ¹³⁷⁵ Walzer, *On Toleration*, pp. 25-26.
- ¹³⁷⁶ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 26.
- ¹³⁷⁷ Walzer, *On Toleration*, pp. 27-28. Walzer notes that national minorities are more difficult to accommodate in a nation-state and may well seek to secede.
- ¹³⁷⁸ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 31.
- ¹³⁷⁹ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 31.
- ¹³⁸⁰ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 36.
- ¹³⁸¹ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 34.
- ¹³⁸² Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 1.
- ¹³⁸³ Walzer, *On Toleration*, pp. 2-3.
- ¹³⁸⁴ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 5.
- ¹³⁸⁵ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 5.
- ¹³⁸⁶ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 8.
- ¹³⁸⁷ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 9.
- ¹³⁸⁸ Walzer, *On Toleration*, pp. 10-11.
- ¹³⁸⁹ Walzer, *On Toleration*, pp. 11-12.
- ¹³⁹⁰ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 37.
- ¹³⁹¹ Walzer, *On Toleration*, pp. 39-40.
- ¹³⁹² Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 64.
- ¹³⁹³ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 65.

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- ¹³⁹⁴ Walzer, *On Toleration*, pp. 87-92.
- ¹³⁹⁵ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 91.
- ¹³⁹⁶ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 92.
- ¹³⁹⁷ M. Walzer, *Politics and Passion: Toward a More Egalitarian Liberalism*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005). This is an expanded version of Walzer's Horkheimer Lectures, published in German in 1999 as *Reason, Politics, and Passion* (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1999).
- ¹³⁹⁸ M. Walzer, "On Involuntary Association," in *Freedom of Association*, ed A. Gutmann, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 64-74.
- ¹³⁹⁹ M. Walzer, "Deliberation, and What Else?" in *Deliberative Politics: Essays on Democracy and Disagreement*, ed. S. Macedo, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 58-69, reprinted in Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, pp. 134-146.
- ¹⁴⁰⁰ Walzer, "On Involuntary Association," pp. 65-66.
- ¹⁴⁰¹ Walzer, "On Involuntary Association," pp. 66-67.
- ¹⁴⁰² Walzer, "On Involuntary Association," pp. 67-68.
- ¹⁴⁰³ Walzer, "On Involuntary Association," pp. 68-70.
- ¹⁴⁰⁴ Walzer, "Deliberation," pp. 134-135. This is not to say that all deliberative democrats privilege reason. Iris Marion Young, for example, is supportive of many of the aims of deliberative democracy but makes very similar points about the privileging of reason or articulateness over passion. On this point, see M. Bevir and T. Reiner, "The Revival of Radical Pluralism: Associationism and Difference," in *Modern Pluralism: Debates Since 1880*, ed. M. Bevir, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).
- ¹⁴⁰⁵ Walzer, "Deliberation," p. 143.
- ¹⁴⁰⁶ Walzer, "Deliberation," p. 145.
- ¹⁴⁰⁷ Walzer, "Deliberation," p. 145.
- ¹⁴⁰⁸ Another way in which "On Involuntary Association" is clearly a product of its time is that it reiterates Walzer's critique of Julia Kristeva's theory of the self-fashioning individual discussed in *On Toleration*. See "On Involuntary Association," pp. 70-72. Walzer's central point is one reminiscent of Charles Taylor's social thesis: we develop the capacity to make autonomous choices only within the context of a particular society, in this case one in which people have been taught to make choices between associational memberships (p. 73).
- ¹⁴⁰⁹ M. Walzer, "Drawing the Line: Religion and Politics," *Utah Law Review*, (1999, no. 3), 619-638, reprinted in *Thinking Politically*, pp. 147-167.
- ¹⁴¹⁰ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, pp. 148-152.
- ¹⁴¹¹ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, pp. 153-158.
- ¹⁴¹² Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, pp. 158-164.
- ¹⁴¹³ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 148.
- ¹⁴¹⁴ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, pp. 148-149.
- ¹⁴¹⁵ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 149. Compare this with Walzer's account of civil religion in *On Toleration*, pp. 76-80.
- ¹⁴¹⁶ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 149.
- ¹⁴¹⁷ This does not mean that religion has to be absolutist in character. It may be "discursive, speculative, and argumentative" (p. 150), but it is a "mixed bag" (p. 151). Religion as a mixed bag is one of the recurring themes of the lecture (see also pp. 152 and 154).
- ¹⁴¹⁸ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 152.
- ¹⁴¹⁹ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 153.
- ¹⁴²⁰ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 154. It will, in other words, look much like politics dominated by deliberation.
- ¹⁴²¹ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 156.
- ¹⁴²² Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 153.
- ¹⁴²³ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 156.
- ¹⁴²⁴ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 157.

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- ¹⁴²⁵ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 158.
- ¹⁴²⁶ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 160.
- ¹⁴²⁷ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 161.
- ¹⁴²⁸ The last three quotes are all from p. 164.
- ¹⁴²⁹ Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, p. x. Emphasis added.
- ¹⁴³⁰ M. Walzer, "Shared Meanings in a Poly-Ethnic Democratic Setting," *Journal of Religious Ethics*, vol. 22, no. 2 (1994), 402.
- ¹⁴³¹ This topic is most directly addressed in the epilogue to *On Toleration*, "Reflections on American Multiculturalism," pp. 93-112.
- ¹⁴³² Walzer, "Multiculturalism and the Politics of Interest," p. 95.
- ¹⁴³³ Walzer, "Multiculturalism and the Politics of Interest," p. 97.
- ¹⁴³⁴ Walzer, "Multiculturalism and the Politics of Interest," p. 97.
- ¹⁴³⁵ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 111.
- ¹⁴³⁶ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 111.
- ¹⁴³⁷ Walzer, *On Toleration* p. 112.
- ¹⁴³⁸ On this point, see Walzer, *On Toleration*, pp. 95-96 and "Multiculturalism and the Politics of Interest," p. 90.
- ¹⁴³⁹ Walzer, "Blacks and Jews," p. 408.
- ¹⁴⁴⁰ M. Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent: America in Search of a Public Philosophy*, (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996).
- ¹⁴⁴¹ Walzer, "Michael Sandel's America," p. 175.
- ¹⁴⁴² Walzer, "Michael Sandel's America," pp. 175-177.
- ¹⁴⁴³ Walzer, "Michael Sandel's America," p. 177.
- ¹⁴⁴⁴ Walzer, "Michael Sandel's America," p. 178.
- ¹⁴⁴⁵ Walzer, "Michael Sandel's America," p. 182.
- ¹⁴⁴⁶ Walzer, "Michael Sandel's America," p. 177.
- ¹⁴⁴⁷ Walzer, "Michael Sandel's America," pp. 181-182.
- ¹⁴⁴⁸ Walzer, "Michael Sandel's America," p. 181. In *Democracy's Discontent*, Sandel contrasts the "political economies of prosperity and fairness" with the "political economy of citizenship." The last is the preferred republican alternative. The political economy of fairness is the one that uses the language of distributive justice. See Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent*, pp. 123-167. In Sandel's recent book, *Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2009), a similar distinction is drawn between welfare, freedom, and virtue (pp. 6-10).
- ¹⁴⁴⁹ Walzer, *Toward a Global Civil Society*, p. 4.
- ¹⁴⁵⁰ M. Walzer, "On Negative Politics," in *Liberalism without Illusions: Essays on Liberal Theory and the Political Vision of Judith N. Shklar*, ed B. Yack, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 19.
- ¹⁴⁵¹ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 71. C.f. M. Walzer, "Education, Democratic Citizenship, and Multiculturalism," *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, vol. 29, issue 2 (1995), 181-189, in which neither consociationalism nor international society are on the list of regimes, so that only empires, nation-states, and immigrant societies remain.
- ¹⁴⁵² Walzer, "Education, Democratic Citizenship, and Multiculturalism," 182.
- ¹⁴⁵³ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 73.
- ¹⁴⁵⁴ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 74.
- ¹⁴⁵⁵ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 72.
- ¹⁴⁵⁶ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 75.
- ¹⁴⁵⁷ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 75.
- ¹⁴⁵⁸ Walzer, "Education," 185-187.
- ¹⁴⁵⁹ Walzer, "Education," 185.
- ¹⁴⁶⁰ Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 80.
- ¹⁴⁶¹ Walzer et al, *The Jewish Political Tradition*, p. xvi.

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- ¹⁴⁶² Walzer et al, *The Jewish Political Tradition*, pp. xxiii-xxiv.
- ¹⁴⁶³ Walzer et al, *The Jewish Political Tradition*, pp. xxxii-xxxviii.
- ¹⁴⁶⁴ Walzer et al, *The Jewish Political Tradition*, pp. xxi-xxxi.
- ¹⁴⁶⁵ Walzer et al, *The Jewish Political Tradition*, p. xvi.
- ¹⁴⁶⁶ Walzer et al, *The Jewish Political Tradition*, pp. 139-141.
- ¹⁴⁶⁷ Walzer et al, *The Jewish Political Tradition*, pp. 217-219.
- ¹⁴⁶⁸ Walzer et al, *The Jewish Political Tradition*, pp. 352-355.
- ¹⁴⁶⁹ Walzer et al, *The Jewish Political Tradition*, p. 354.
- ¹⁴⁷⁰ Walzer et al, *The Jewish Political Tradition*, p. xxii.
- ¹⁴⁷¹ Walzer et al, *The Jewish Political Tradition*, pp. xxii-xxiii.
- ¹⁴⁷² Walzer et al, *The Jewish Political Tradition*, pp. xxiii-xxiv.
- ¹⁴⁷³ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. xxii.
- ¹⁴⁷⁴ Walzer, *The Jewish Political Tradition*, p. xxxi. An interesting feature of the introduction that I am not sure can be found elsewhere in Walzer's work is the commentary on the pervasiveness of politics. He notes that politics is normally associated with the state in Western thought but the Jewish tradition shows that "politics is pervasive, with or without state sovereignty" (p. xxi).
- ¹⁴⁷⁵ Walzer discusses liberalism with adjectives in "On Negative Politics," pp. 21-24.
- ¹⁴⁷⁶ For example, a question and answer session given by Walzer on 18 March 2010 can be found at <http://videos.apnicommunity.com/Video.Item,3823304448.html>, a talk on Jewish cultural pluralism given at the New School for Social Research is available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0-q1UGZnGjA>, and a discussion by Walzer of his contribution to the Templeton Foundation's debate on the effect of the market on morality appears at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FN_a2u6altU.
- ¹⁴⁷⁷ Walzer was then ranked 61st in the 2008 poll.
- ¹⁴⁷⁸ M. Walzer, *Civil Society and American Democracy*, (Rotbuch Verlag: 1992).
- ¹⁴⁷⁹ Personal interview with the author, 19 April 2010.
- ¹⁴⁸⁰ The second edition was published in 1992 and contains a new foreword on the (first) Gulf War), which was discussed in chapter 4. The third edition came out in 2000 and contains a foreword on humanitarian interventions, which I discuss below. The fourth edition dates from 2007. Its foreword is about the most recent war in Iraq and is also discussed below.
- ¹⁴⁸¹ Walzer, *Arguing About War*. The other two are *Politics and Passion* and *Thinking Politically*.
- ¹⁴⁸² B. Orend, *War and International Justice: A Kantian Perspective*, (Wilfried Laurier University Press, 2000) and "Justice After War", *Ethics and International Affairs*, 16.1 (Spring 2002), 43-56.
- ¹⁴⁸³ His thoughts were originally published as "Governing the Globe: What Is the Best We Can Do?" *Dissent*, (Fall 2000), 44-51. Other considerations on this topic can be found in M. Walzer, "Beyond Humanitarian Intervention: Human Rights in Global Society", in *Thinking Politically*, pp. 251-263.
- ¹⁴⁸⁴ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, preface to the fourth edition.
- ¹⁴⁸⁵ M. Walzer, "Liberalism, Nationalism, Reform," in *The Legacy of Isaiah Berlin*, ed. R. Dworkin, M. Lilla, and R. Silvers, (New York: New York Review Books, 2001), pp. 169-176. See also the discussion that follows, pp. 178-197, and the heated debate between Walzer and Dworkin.
- ¹⁴⁸⁶ Perhaps this is because Walzer, due to his age and diabetes, no longer has the luxury of delaying work on particular topics until he has worked through more pressing ones. He did this with *Spheres*, work on which was begun in the early 1970s and then postponed for several years because he was preoccupied with writing *Just and Unjust Wars*.
- ¹⁴⁸⁷ Walzer told me in our interview that prior to becoming involved in the *Jewish Political Tradition* project, his Jewish education was not nearly as extensive as it is now.
- ¹⁴⁸⁸ See, for example, the argument that the Jewish theory of war needs updating in light of the fact of statehood in M. Walzer, "Commanded and Permitted Wars," in *Law, Politics, and Morality in Judaism*, and the argument that Zionist nationalism and the religious tradition need to be brought into conversation with each other in M. Walzer, "Zionism and Judaism," in *Judaism and Modernity: The Religious*

Philosophy of David Hartman, ed. J. Malino, (Hampshire, UK, and Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), pp. 308-325.

¹⁴⁸⁹ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. xii.

¹⁴⁹⁰ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. xiii.

¹⁴⁹¹ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. xiv.

¹⁴⁹² Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. xiv.

¹⁴⁹³ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. xv.

¹⁴⁹⁴ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, pp. 33-50 and 51-66, respectively.

¹⁴⁹⁵ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, pp. 44-45, 49.

¹⁴⁹⁶ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 45.

¹⁴⁹⁷ Walzer notes this in *Arguing About War*, pp. 45-46, 200n.

¹⁴⁹⁸ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 33.

¹⁴⁹⁹ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 62.

¹⁵⁰⁰ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, pp. 63-66.

¹⁵⁰¹ Originally published as M. Walzer, "Two Kinds of Military Responsibility", *Parameters: Journal of the US Army War College*, 11 (March 1981), 2-46.

¹⁵⁰² Walzer, *Arguing About War*, pp. 24-25.

¹⁵⁰³ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 29.

¹⁵⁰⁴ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 29.

¹⁵⁰⁵ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 31.

¹⁵⁰⁶ Originally published as M. Walzer, "The Politics of Rescue", *Dissent*, (Winter 1995), 35-41.

¹⁵⁰⁷ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 69.

¹⁵⁰⁸ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, pp. 69-70.

¹⁵⁰⁹ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, pp. 73-75.

¹⁵¹⁰ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 76. Walzer revisits these themes in his discussion of the Iraq War in part two of the book and in his introduction to M. Walzer and N. Mills, ed, *Getting Out: Historical Perspectives on Leaving Iraq*, (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press: 2009), pp. 1-9, discussed below.

¹⁵¹¹ Originally published in *Social Research*, 69, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 925-944.

¹⁵¹² Walzer, *Arguing About War*, pp. 3-15.

¹⁵¹³ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 16.

¹⁵¹⁴ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, pp. 17-18.

¹⁵¹⁵ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, pp. 20-21.

¹⁵¹⁶ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 22.

¹⁵¹⁷ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, pp. 87-88.

¹⁵¹⁸ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, pp.92-98.

¹⁵¹⁹ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 99.

¹⁵²⁰ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, pp. 104-105.

¹⁵²¹ As made clear in the argument about "meat and potatoes" multiculturalism discussed in the previous chapter.

¹⁵²² Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 107.

¹⁵²³ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, pp. 109-110.

¹⁵²⁴ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, pp. 110-111.

¹⁵²⁵ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 112.

¹⁵²⁶ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 113.

¹⁵²⁷ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 116.

¹⁵²⁸ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 119.

¹⁵²⁹ Walzer acknowledges this point on p. 123.

¹⁵³⁰ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 129.

¹⁵³¹ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, pp. 131-132.

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- ¹⁵³² Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 132.
- ¹⁵³³ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 133.
- ¹⁵³⁴ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 137.
- ¹⁵³⁵ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 139.
- ¹⁵³⁶ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 139. He notes that in the case of someone like Hitler, with whom Allied forces had no intention of negotiating, assassination would not have been forbidden.
- ¹⁵³⁷ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, pp. 149-151, 156-159. C.f. Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, pp. 296-299.
- ¹⁵³⁸ Walzer does not suggest that the survival of Saddam Hussein's regime would have been a good thing. Indeed, in "The Right Way" (*Arguing About War*, pp. 151-157), he insists that the Iraqi regime is particularly tyrannical, brutal, and dangerous. He goes on to argue that containing those dangers is justifiable but that war aimed at regime change would have consequences too unpredictable to make it pass any proportionality test.
- ¹⁵³⁹ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 161.
- ¹⁵⁴⁰ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 163.
- ¹⁵⁴¹ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, pp. 165-168.
- ¹⁵⁴² Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 168.
- ¹⁵⁴³ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, pp. 171-172.
- ¹⁵⁴⁴ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 186.
- ¹⁵⁴⁵ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 173.
- ¹⁵⁴⁶ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, pp. 175-177.
- ¹⁵⁴⁷ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 185.
- ¹⁵⁴⁸ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, pp. 189-190.
- ¹⁵⁴⁹ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 190.
- ¹⁵⁵⁰ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. vii. (From the introduction by David Miller).
- ¹⁵⁵¹ M. Walzer, "What Rights for Illiberal Communities?" in *Forms of Justice: Critical Perspectives on David Miller's Political Philosophy*, ed. D. Bell and A. de-Shalit (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), pp. 123-134. Reprinted with modifications as "Cultural Rights" in Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, pp. 44-65.
- ¹⁵⁵² Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. vii.
- ¹⁵⁵³ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, pp. vii-viii.
- ¹⁵⁵⁴ For the full list of credits, see *Thinking Politically*, pp. 325-326.
- ¹⁵⁵⁵ Personal interview with the author, 19 April 2010.
- ¹⁵⁵⁶ It may also be worthy of note that, according to Walzer, once an article has been accepted for publication in an academic journal, he both adds footnotes and "muddies the prose" a little. (Personal interview with the author, 19 April 2010).
- ¹⁵⁵⁷ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, pp. vii-viii. I find the first claim somewhat odd, for both "The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism" and "Deliberation, and What Else?" were also published in *Politics and Passion*, which came out just a year before *Thinking Politically*. Furthermore, as discussed in chapter 5, "The Politics of Difference" is an early draft of part of *On Toleration*.
- ¹⁵⁵⁸ Concerning as it does the various regimes of toleration, "The Politics of Difference" is probably best described as blurring the line between this all-too-neat dichotomy.
- ¹⁵⁵⁹ There would presumably have been strong grounds for including "In Defense of Equality" because of its similar role in laying the groundwork for the argument of *Spheres*. However, "In Defense of Equality" was also published in *Radical Principles*.
- ¹⁵⁶⁰ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, pp. 237-238.
- ¹⁵⁶¹ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, pp. 238-240.
- ¹⁵⁶² Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, pp. 240-244.
- ¹⁵⁶³ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, pp. 244-246.
- ¹⁵⁶⁴ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 246.
- ¹⁵⁶⁵ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 248.

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- ¹⁵⁶⁶ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 248.
- ¹⁵⁶⁷ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 251.
- ¹⁵⁶⁸ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 254.
- ¹⁵⁶⁹ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 255.
- ¹⁵⁷⁰ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, pp. 257-258.
- ¹⁵⁷¹ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 259.
- ¹⁵⁷² Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 261. Walzer remains agnostic on the philosophical question of whether such rights exist at all.
- ¹⁵⁷³ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, pp. 264-265.
- ¹⁵⁷⁴ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, pp. 265-266.
- ¹⁵⁷⁵ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 267.
- ¹⁵⁷⁶ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, p. 269.
- ¹⁵⁷⁷ Walzer, *Thinking Politically*, pp. 272-277.
- ¹⁵⁷⁸ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. xiii. Walzer notes that his concern is “chiefly, though not only”, with the United States.
- ¹⁵⁷⁹ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. xii.
- ¹⁵⁸⁰ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. xii.
- ¹⁵⁸¹ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. x.
- ¹⁵⁸² Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, pp. 141-163.
- ¹⁵⁸³ Personal interview with the author, 19 April 2010.
- ¹⁵⁸⁴ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. xiii. See also the acknowledgments, pp. 165-166.
- ¹⁵⁸⁵ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. 140.
- ¹⁵⁸⁶ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. x. C.f. p. 20.
- ¹⁵⁸⁷ This is also a theme in Walzer’s debate with Ronald Dworkin and with Thomas Nagel at the festschrift for Isaiah Berlin. See *The Legacy of Isaiah Berlin*, pp. 178-197.
- ¹⁵⁸⁸ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, pp. 1-20.
- ¹⁵⁸⁹ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. 3.
- ¹⁵⁹⁰ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. 5.
- ¹⁵⁹¹ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. 7.
- ¹⁵⁹² Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, pp. 8-9.
- ¹⁵⁹³ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, pp. 9-10.
- ¹⁵⁹⁴ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. 11.
- ¹⁵⁹⁵ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. 11. C.f. the argument of *Obligations*. Another noteworthy feature of this chapter is its reiteration of the critique of the process of perpetual self-invention and creation advocated by Julia Kristeva and George Kateb, which Walzer first objected to in *On Toleration*.
- ¹⁵⁹⁶ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. 33.
- ¹⁵⁹⁷ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. 33.
- ¹⁵⁹⁸ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. 37.
- ¹⁵⁹⁹ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. 41.
- ¹⁶⁰⁰ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. 41.
- ¹⁶⁰¹ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. 43.
- ¹⁶⁰² Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, pp. 44-45. When it was first published, this chapter was called “What Rights for Illiberal Communities?” It can be found in *Forms of Justice: Critical Perspectives on David Miller’s Political Philosophy*, ed. D. Bell and A. de-Shalit, (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), pp. 123-134.
- ¹⁶⁰³ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, pp. 52-55.
- ¹⁶⁰⁴ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. 61.
- ¹⁶⁰⁵ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. 64.

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- ¹⁶⁰⁶ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, pp. 66-89, first published as M. Walzer, "Equality and Civil Society", in *Alternative Conceptions of Civil Society*, ed. S. Chambers and W. Kymlicka, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), pp. 34-49.
- ¹⁶⁰⁷ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. 88.
- ¹⁶⁰⁸ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, pp. 87-88.
- ¹⁶⁰⁹ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. 91. C.f. A. Gutmann and D. Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement*, (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), H. Richardson, *Democratic Autonomy: Public Reasoning About the Ends of Policy*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). As Walzer makes clear at the start of the chapter (p. 90), he also has philosophical variants on these theories such as that of Jurgen Habermas in mind. Remember Walzer's earlier criticisms of Habermas in "A Critique of Philosophical Conversation" and, less directly, in "Philosophy and Democracy".
- ¹⁶¹⁰ This is the exceptional item on Walzer's list, as it denotes an activity that Walzer takes to be necessarily excluded from democratic politics. It is important because of the reason for its exclusion: corrupt activities such as bribery are not excluded because they interfere with deliberation but because it interferes with democratic representation (pp. 100-101).
- ¹⁶¹¹ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, pp. 92-102.
- ¹⁶¹² Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, pp. 102-103.
- ¹⁶¹³ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. 106.
- ¹⁶¹⁴ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. 105.
- ¹⁶¹⁵ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. 109.
- ¹⁶¹⁶ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. 130.
- ¹⁶¹⁷ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. 130.
- ¹⁶¹⁸ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. 126.
- ¹⁶¹⁹ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. 127.
- ¹⁶²⁰ A. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism Before Its Triumph*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).
- ¹⁶²¹ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. 121.
- ¹⁶²² Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. 123.
- ¹⁶²³ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. 127.
- ¹⁶²⁴ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. 138.
- ¹⁶²⁵ Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. 139.
- ¹⁶²⁶ The first sentence of *Spheres* is "Equality literally understood is an ideal ripe for betrayal". Walzer then explains that simple equality could not last beyond the opening meeting of the movement. *Spheres*, p. xi.
- ¹⁶²⁷ M. Walzer, "The Crime of Aggressive War," *Washington Global Studies Law Review*, vol. 6, no. 3, 2007, 635-643.
- ¹⁶²⁸ M. Walzer, "On Fighting Terrorism Justly", *International Relations*, vol. 21, no. 4, December 2007, 480-484.
- ¹⁶²⁹ M. Walzer, "A Liberal Perspective on Deterrence and Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction", in *Ethics and Weapons of Mass Destruction: Religious and Secular Perspectives*, ed. S. Hashmi and S. Lee, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 163-167.
- ¹⁶³⁰ M. Walzer, "Can There Be a Moral Foreign Policy?" in *Liberty and Power: A Dialogue on Religion and US Foreign Policy in an Unjust World*, ed. E. Dionne Junior, J. Bethke Elshtain, and K. Drogosz, (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), pp. 34-52.
- ¹⁶³¹ M. Walzer, "Is There an American Empire?" *Dissent* (Fall 2003), 27-31.
- ¹⁶³² The third edition was published in 2000 and the fourth in 2007. Walzer has also reprinted various other works on just war theory in recent years. In 2001 an extract from *Just and Unjust Wars* was reprinted as M. Walzer, "Double Effect", in *The Doctrine of Double Effect: Philosophers Debate a Controversial Moral Principle*, ed. P. Woodward, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), pp. 261-269. This extract covers pages 151-159 of *Just and Unjust Wars*. In 2008, "The Moral Standing

of States” was reprinted in *Global Ethics: Seminal Essays*, ed. T. Pogge and K. Horton, (Paragon House, 2008), pp. 51-71.

¹⁶³³ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 80.

¹⁶³⁴ Walzer, *Arguing About War*, p. 80.

¹⁶³⁵ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, third edition (2000), p. xi.

¹⁶³⁶ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, third edition, pp. xi-xii.

¹⁶³⁷ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, third edition, p. xiii.

¹⁶³⁸ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, third edition, pp. xiv-xv.

¹⁶³⁹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, fourth edition, pp. x-xi.

¹⁶⁴⁰ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, fourth edition, p. xviii.

¹⁶⁴¹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, fourth edition, p. x.

¹⁶⁴² Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, fourth edition, p. xvi.

¹⁶⁴³ Shue’s argument precedes Walzer’s in *Ethics and Weapons of Mass Destruction*, “Liberalism: The Impossibility of Justifying Weapons of Mass Destruction”, pp. 139-162.

¹⁶⁴⁴ Shue, “Liberalism”, pp. 156-158.

¹⁶⁴⁵ Walzer, “A Liberal Perspective”, p. 163.

¹⁶⁴⁶ Walzer, “A Liberal Perspective”, p. 165.

¹⁶⁴⁷ Walzer, “A Liberal Perspective”, p. 165.

¹⁶⁴⁸ Walzer, “A Liberal Perspective”, p. 166. Walzer also notes that, “Under certain conditions, economic blockade may be a weapon of mass destruction, and war a more limited response” (p. 167). It is worth thinking about whether this policy sits in tension with his advocacy of a “little war” – consisting of something akin to a blockade – against Iraq in 2003.

¹⁶⁴⁹ Walzer, “A Liberal Perspective”, p. 163.

¹⁶⁵⁰ To cite one (anonymous) example, a fellow graduate student at UC Berkeley lists as “class enemies” on his Facebook page both “Michael Walzer” and “anyone who’s ever been on the editorial board of Dissent”.

¹⁶⁵¹ Personal interview with the author (19 April 2010).

¹⁶⁵² M. Walzer, “Can We Choose Politically Between Right and Left?” in *The Jewish Condition: Challenges and Responses – 1938-2008*, ed. W. Helmreich, M. Rosenblum, and D. Schimel, (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2008), p. 33.

¹⁶⁵³ Walzer, “Can We Choose Politically”, p. 33.

¹⁶⁵⁴ Walzer, “Can We Choose Politically”, p. 35.

¹⁶⁵⁵ This is also a major feature of his Imprints interview. See *Thinking Politically*, pp. 309-310 for a major statement: “It is hard work trying to sustain an oppositionist politics in the US today – especially when part of what I feel I have to oppose is the idiocy of many of my fellow oppositionists”.

¹⁶⁵⁶ M. Walzer, ed, *Law, Politics, and Morality in Judaism*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

¹⁶⁵⁷ Walzer, *Law, Politics, and Morality in Judaism*, p. vii. As we shall see, this is one of Walzer’s principal arguments in his research on Jewish political thought. See also M. Walzer, “Universalism and Jewish Values,” The Twentieth Morgenthau Memorial Lecture on Ethics and Foreign Policy (May 15, 2001), (New York, Carnegie Council on Ethics and Foreign Policy), 2001, [the entire text of “Universalism and Jewish Values” can be found online at

www.cceia.org/resources/publications/morgenthau/114.html, and the site also contains useful links to other of Walzer’s texts, including two talks given about *Arguing About War*, and a debate with Peter Maass on the politics of intervention] M. Walzer, “Zionism and Judaism”, in *Judaism and Modernity: The Religious Philosophy of David Hartman*, ed J. Malino, (Hampshire, England, and Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), pp. 308-325, and M. Walzer, “The Anomalies of Jewish Political Identity”, in *Judaism and the Challenges of Modern Life*, ed. M. Halbertal and D. Hartman, (Continuum: New York, 2007), pp. 134-138.

¹⁶⁵⁸ Walzer, “Commanded and Permitted Wars”, p. 149.

¹⁶⁵⁹ Walzer, “Commanded and Permitted Wars”, pp. 166-167. I explain more fully what permitted wars are in my account of Walzer’s writing about Judaism below.

¹⁶⁶⁰ This can be seen in the fact that Walzer poses for himself the question of whether there can be a moral foreign policy in the article of that name, which largely repeats arguments discussed in *Arguing About War* and *Thinking Politically* such to what extent the role of human action in causing suffering is important to a theory of our global ethical responsibilities. See Walzer, “Can There Be a Moral Foreign Policy?” pp. 44-45.

¹⁶⁶¹ Walzer, “Can There Be a Moral Foreign Policy?” pp. 36-37.

¹⁶⁶² M. Walzer and N. Mills, ed, *Getting Out: Historical Perspectives on Leaving Iraq*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

¹⁶⁶³ Walzer and Mills, *Getting Out*, p. 3.

¹⁶⁶⁴ Walzer and Mills, *Getting Out*, p. 8.

¹⁶⁶⁵ Walzer and Mills, *Getting Out*, p. 9.

¹⁶⁶⁶ See I. Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), especially pp. 52-80. For a discussion of Young’s position, see M. Bevir and T. Reiner, “The Revival of Radical Pluralism: Associationism and Difference”, in *Modern Pluralism: Debates Since 1880*, ed. M. Bevir, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

¹⁶⁶⁷ See Walzer, “Liberalism, Nationalism, Reform”, pp. 169-176, M. Walzer, “Nation-States and Immigrant Societies”, in *Can Liberal Pluralism Be Exported? : Western Political Theory and Ethnic Relations in Eastern Europe*, ed. W. Kymlicka and M. Opalski, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 150-153, M. Walzer, “Can There Be a Decent Left?” *Dissent* (Spring 2002), 19-23, M. Walzer, “Passion and Politics”, *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, vol. 28 (November 2002), 6-23, Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, and M. Walzer, “All God’s Children Got Values”, *Dissent* (Spring 2005), 35-40.

¹⁶⁶⁸ Walzer, “Liberalism, Nationalism, Reform”, pp. 170-172.

¹⁶⁶⁹ Walzer, “Liberalism, Nationalism, Reform”, pp. 170-171.

¹⁶⁷⁰ See chapter 4 for a discussion of this lecture.

¹⁶⁷¹ That, at any rate, was what Walzer claimed was the inspiration for *Interpretation* in our interview on April 19, 2010. For Dworkin’s review, see R. Dworkin, “To Each His Own,” *The New York Review of Books*, April 14, 1983, available online at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1983/apr/14/to-each-his-own/>. (The full version is available only to subscribers to *The New York Review of Books*).

¹⁶⁷² Discussion, “Nationalism and Israel”, in Dworkin, Lilla, and Silvers, ed, *The Legacy of Isaiah Berlin*, p. 190.

¹⁶⁷³ Discussion, “Nationalism and Israel”, pp. 190-193, 195-198.

¹⁶⁷⁴ Discussion, “Nationalism and Israel”, p. 193.

¹⁶⁷⁵ Discussion, “Nationalism and Israel”, pp. 195-196.

¹⁶⁷⁶ Discussion, “Nationalism and Israel”, p. 193. A cynic might ask whether it is worth bearing in mind that, when those words were published, Walzer was 66 and Dworkin was 69.

¹⁶⁷⁷ Discussion, “Nationalism and Israel”, p. 198.

¹⁶⁷⁸ Walzer, “Equality and Civil Society”, p. 35.

¹⁶⁷⁹ Walzer, “Nation-States and Immigrant Societies”, p. 151. However, Walzer also reiterates his distinction – most prominently drawn in *On Toleration* – between the nation-state model of minority incorporation and that of the immigrant society, and insists that as an immigrant society the US has not subjected immigrants to as much pressure as have European nation-states such as France. (For the discussion of *On Toleration*, see chapter 5).

¹⁶⁸⁰ Personal interview with the author, 19 April 2010.

¹⁶⁸¹ Walzer, “Commanded and Permitted Wars”, p. 167. C.f. Walzer’s introductions to both published volumes of *The Jewish Political Tradition*.

¹⁶⁸² This argument is advanced in “Commanded and Permitted Wars”.

¹⁶⁸³ Walzer, “A Liberal Perspective”, p. 163.

¹⁶⁸⁴ Walzer, “Can We Choose Politically”, p. 33.

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- ¹⁶⁸⁵ Walzer, *Law, Politics, and Morality in Judaism*, p. vii.
- ¹⁶⁸⁶ Walzer, *Law, Politics, and Morality in Judaism*, p. vii.
- ¹⁶⁸⁷ Walzer, *Law, Politics, and Morality in Judaism*, p. viii.
- ¹⁶⁸⁸ This is also central to the argument of “Commanded and Permitted Wars”.
- ¹⁶⁸⁹ Walzer, “Zionism and Judaism”, p. 316.
- ¹⁶⁹⁰ Walzer, “Zionism and Judaism”, pp. 316-317.
- ¹⁶⁹¹ Walzer, “Universalism and Jewish Values”, quoted from the online edition cited above. Walzer also sketches a variant on the argument of “Nation and Universe” to the extent that the Jewish tradition supports a reiterative type of universalism that he here calls “low-flying”, and which stands in opposition to what he earlier called “Covering-Law Universalism”.
- ¹⁶⁹² Walzer, “The Anomalies of Jewish Political Identity”, p. 134. C.f. Walzer, “Can We Choose Politically”, p. 34. Walzer argues that Judaism is unlike other religions in also being a nation (“The Anomalies”, p. 135), but the case could be made that Islam is also both nation and religion. See, for example, M. Ruthven, *Islam: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 1-8.
- ¹⁶⁹³ Walzer, “Commanded and Permitted Wars”, p. 150.
- ¹⁶⁹⁴ Walzer, “Commanded and Permitted Wars”, p. 151.
- ¹⁶⁹⁵ Walzer, “Commanded and Permitted Wars”, pp. 152-153.
- ¹⁶⁹⁶ Walzer, “Commanded and Permitted Wars”, pp. 151-152.
- ¹⁶⁹⁷ Walzer, “Commanded and Permitted Wars”, p. 164. In *Just and Unjust Wars*, Walzer claims to be reviving the practice of casuistry (p. xxiv).
- ¹⁶⁹⁸ Walzer, “Commanded and Permitted Wars”, p. 166.
- ¹⁶⁹⁹ I say non-Jewish because, as Walzer notes, just war theory was originally a Catholic doctrine. However, (as noted above) in his response to Shue, Walzer argues that his own variant of just war theory is marked by “Jewish anxiety”.
- ¹⁷⁰⁰ It is worth noting that Walzer may downplay the extent to which the Jewish tradition has scope for a “prohibited war”. In the article that follows Walzer’s, Aviezer Ravitzky argues that, “Walzer’s discussion also reveals possibilities immanent in the classical religious sources...for developing a contemporary Jewish ethic of war”. A. Ravitzky, “Prohibited Wars”, in Walzer, Ed, *Law, Politics, and Morality in Judaism*, p. 169.
- ¹⁷⁰¹ Walzer, *Law, Politics, and Morality in Judaism*, p. vii.
- ¹⁷⁰² “Interpretation has always been the dominant strategy of Jewish legal innovation”, says Walzer on p. vii of *Law, Politics, and Morality in Judaism*.
- ¹⁷⁰³ MacIntyre argues that in “classical” cultures, “the chief means of moral education is the telling of stories”. A. MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981, third edition 2007), p. 121. C.f. pp. 204-225.
- ¹⁷⁰⁴ Given that Walzer was 65 at the beginning of the period that this chapter considers, it is probably not surprising that he did not branch out into radically new areas.
- ¹⁷⁰⁵ J. Cohen, “Book Reviews: Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality”, *The Journal of Philosophy*, 83/8 (August 1986), 457-468. The key quote is on 458: “Critical, democratic substance and communitarian method pull in different directions, and neither is aided or clarified by being mixed with the other.” C.f. R. Dworkin, “To Each His Own”, the *New York Review of Books*, April 14, 1983.
- ¹⁷⁰⁶ Personal interview with the author, 19 April 2010.
- ¹⁷⁰⁷ Walzer states Kymlicka’s influence in the acknowledgements to *Politics and Passion*. Kymlicka has been working on such questions since the publication of *Liberalism, Community, and Culture* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989). The major work is W. Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995).
- ¹⁷⁰⁸ In my interview with Walzer, he started emphatically both that Beer was a major influence behind his adoption of the historical method and that Beer was of no influence whatsoever in his choice of topic, as

he had chosen the topic before arriving at Harvard as a graduate student. Furthermore, Beer knew very little about the various Puritan movements that Walzer discusses.

¹⁷⁰⁹ Walzer, “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism,” pp. 6-22. For a full account of this article, see chapter 4 of the thesis.

¹⁷¹⁰ Walzer, *On Toleration*. I have drawn the word “greedy” from *Politics and Passion*, but it is clearly intended for usage in situations such as the one Walzer is discussing in *On Toleration*.

¹⁷¹¹ Walzer, “Socializing the Welfare State.”

¹⁷¹² Walzer, “The Moral Standing of States”. See chapter 2 for a detailed discussion of this point.

¹⁷¹³ Cited in Bloom, *Prodigal Sons*, pp. 285-287.

¹⁷¹⁴ Jumonville, *Critical Crossings*, pp. 84-85.

¹⁷¹⁵ Jumonville, *The New York Intellectuals Reader*, pp. 371-372.

¹⁷¹⁶ Howe, “Socialism and Liberalism”, in Jumonville, *The New York Intellectuals Reader*, p. 382.

¹⁷¹⁷ Jumonville, *The New York Intellectuals Reader*, p. 372. For a discussion of Walzer’s argument about welfare being provided by secondary associations in civil society, see chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis.

¹⁷¹⁸ See chapter 4 for a discussion of this claim.

¹⁷¹⁹ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 40.

¹⁷²⁰ Walzer, *Radical Principles*, p. 41.

¹⁷²¹ See chapter 3, section IV.1, for a detailed explanation of this argument. C.f. chapter 4, section IV.

¹⁷²² Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, pp. 21-43. See chapter 6 for a detailed discussion of this work.

¹⁷²³ Orend, *Michael Walzer on War and Justice*.

¹⁷²⁴ Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, chapter 2, Walzer, *The Company of Critics*, chapter 1.

¹⁷²⁵ Orend, *Michael Walzer*, p. 23.

¹⁷²⁶ Orend, *Michael Walzer*, pp. 25-29.

¹⁷²⁷ Walzer, “Philosophy and Democracy”. See chapter 3 of the thesis for an extended discussion of this article.

¹⁷²⁸ Orend does acknowledge this point at the end of his analysis. See Orend, *Michael Walzer*, pp. 28-29.

¹⁷²⁹ See chapter 4 of the thesis for a discussion of Walzer’s attempt to show that separation of the spheres would lead to complex equality rather than to complex inequality. See Walzer “Exclusion, Injustice, and the Democratic State” for his account of this theme.

¹⁷³⁰ Orend, *Michael Walzer*, chapter 7.

¹⁷³¹ Orend, *Michael Walzer*, chapter 2.

¹⁷³² I am here objecting to Orend’s argument in *Michael Walzer*, chapter 2.

¹⁷³³ This sentence paraphrases Walzer’s conclusion to “Deliberation...and what else?”

¹⁷³⁴ Walzer, *The Company of Critics*. Note that Walzer is somewhat inconsistent on this issue, as I note in chapter 4 of the thesis. In *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, he argues that the biblical prophets invented social criticism, which implies that it may actually be “social complaint” that is as old as society itself.

¹⁷³⁵ Warnke, *Justice and Interpretation*.

¹⁷³⁶ Dworkin, “To Each His Own.”

¹⁷³⁷ In a personal interview with the author in October 2010, Warnke accepted this point.

¹⁷³⁸ Walzer, “Liberalism and the Art of Separation”. See chapter 3 for a full discussion of this issue. Note also that in “The Long-Term Perspective,” Walzer noted that it was important to keep defending universal healthcare precisely because it seemed so unpopular during the 1980s.

¹⁷³⁹ Pluralism suggests that the distinction is between goods rather than between cultures.

¹⁷⁴⁰ In my interview with him, Walzer told me that he thinks that one of the great benefits of a career as a political theorist is that there is no need to seek objectivity or impartiality.

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