

**BACHELOR'S THESIS EXAMINER REPORT**  
*PPE – Bachelor's in Politics, Philosophy and Economics*  
*Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University*

<b>Thesis title:</b>	<b>Michael Walzer's Theory of Justice Through the Lenses of Deontological Ethics</b>
<b>Student's name:</b>	<b>Mariae Marseille Francine Catalan Pornan</b>
<b>Referee's name:</b>	<b>Janusz Salamon, Ph.D.</b>

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
<b>Major Criteria</b>		<b>80</b>	
	Contribution and argument (quality of research and analysis, originality)	<b>46</b>	
	Research question (definition of objectives, plausibility of hypotheses)	<b>14</b>	
	Theoretical framework (methods relevant to the research question)	<b>14</b>	
<i>Total</i>		<b>72</b>	
<b>Minor Criteria</b>		<b>20</b>	
	Sources, literature	<b>10</b>	
	Presentation (language, style, cohesion)	<b>4</b>	
	Manuscript form (structure, logical coherence, layout, tables, figures)	<b>4</b>	
<i>Total</i>		<b>18</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>92</b>	

**Plagiarism-check (URKUND) match score:** No plagiarism detected. I judge the thesis to be an original work of the author.

*[NB:] If the plagiarism-check (URKUND) match score is above 15%, the reviewer has to include his/her assessment of the originality of the reviewed thesis in his/her review.*

**Reviewer's commentary according to the above criteria** (min. 1800 characters including spaces when recommending a passing grade, min. 2500 characters including spaces when recommending a failing grade):

Mariae Catalan wrote an unusual Bachelor's thesis: intensely ambitious, highly original, bursting with intellectual self-confidence of the author who "thinks big" – a true PPE student. Michael Walzer has been considered for half a century one of the top living theorists of justice. Mariae Catalan bravely lays bare all the shortcomings of Walzer's approach to justice (she does on the basis of impressively broad literature review) but comes up with an original idea of correcting Walzer's theory of "complex equality" and "spheres of justice" by adding to it a layer of deontological concepts of absolutely duties, "red lines", and anthropology of human persons as "ends in themselves". She hopes and argues that this deontological transformation of Walzer's theory will help not just to fix various problems with Walzer's "spheres of justice" being open to criticism (including a fundamental charge that his "spheres of justice" may fail to prevent gross inequalities and serious injustices), but

(perhaps more plausibly) that viewed from a deontological perspective, Walzer's basic intuitions about justice as excluding domination of persons by other persons could be genuinely universalised and globalised, solving the puzzle of exclusivism that Walzer as every communitarian is facing. As someone who has been studying and teaching theories of justice for years, I judge most of Mariae Catalan's intuitions as going in the right direction, and her key suggestion that Walzer's theory of justice might benefit from taking into account deontological insights into the nature of justice found in Kant and his contemporary followers. Mariae has done enormous job exploring two challenging thinkers: Walzer and Kant, and taking into account the work of more than a dozen contemporary authors who wrote about Walzer and Kant. Having said that, I have two not insignificant caveats. Firstly, the thesis is written in such a way that it is not easy to follow the train of thought of the author, and not easy to identify and grasp her key arguments. The claims that are made are often "big", yet such claims require strong backing, and one looks for the moments when Mariae will put the proverbial "dot" over the "i", and these moments are hot to spot. A good example what I mean might be the final section: "Justice in Action: Applying Michael Walzer's Justice Framework from a Deontological Perspective". The title of section promises the culmination of the entire thesis, yet follows on the next six pages is a continuation of a discussion of what other contemporary authors have to say and inspiring generalities like this one: "Recognition of a new global justice ethos through the integration of redistribution and recognition, harnessing social systems through education, bridging cultural divides for global justice through cultural exchange, and advocating for global justice through international organizations and institutions are some of the ways in which we can work towards a more just society. The implementation of these ideas requires a shift in our ways of thinking, promoting a new ethos of moral equality and respect for others." Such fragments of Mariae's impressive thesis also confirm that in scholarly work it is typically easier to criticize others than to come up with an original alternative that would not itself be open to criticism. Mariae's proposal to "marry" Walzer's non-ideal theory of justice that was designed to be maximally flexible to accommodate diverse and ever-changing communal understanding of the meanings of the goods that are supposed to be justly distributed within the given community with the ideal theory approach of Kant and other deontologists (with their universal and inflexible "red lines" way of thinking) may be a very difficult and perhaps conceptually impossible task. Mariae in her thesis devoted a lot of space to the exposition of strengths and weaknesses of Walzer's theory of justice, and then many pages to Robert Hanna's Kantian deontological anthropology, and then advocates bridging these two, without paying too much attention to the requirements and challenges of such a project. She will need to keep working on this brilliant and ambitious project to bring it to full intellectual fruition.

**Proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F): A**

**Suggested questions for the defence are:**

- (1) Could you, please, explain in maximally simple and transparent terms (since Walzer is famous for keeping things simple) how Walzer's theory of justice will work in practice (when applied) after your proposed deontological revision?
- (2) Do you have a sense that after such a transformation of Walzer's theory you end up with a novel theory of justice that is half way between Walzer and Kant, or is it a relatively minor revision of Walzer, or you end up with Kantian theory of justice (and all the talk about "spheres of justice" and "complex equality" may as well be abandoned)?

**I recommend the thesis for final defence.**

---

***Referee Signature***

Overall grading scheme at FSV UK:

TOTAL POINTS	GRADE	Quality standard
91 – 100	<b>A</b>	= outstanding (high honor)
81 – 90	<b>B</b>	= superior (honor)
71 – 80	<b>C</b>	= good
61 – 70	<b>D</b>	= satisfactory
51 – 60	<b>E</b>	= low pass at a margin of failure
0 – 50	<b>F</b>	= failing. The thesis is not recommended for defence.