

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

Thesis title:	<i>Michael Walzer's Theory of Justice Through the Lenses of Deontological Ethics</i>
Student's name:	Mariae Marseille Francine Catalan Pornan
Referee's name:	Jakub Franěk

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Contribution and argument (quality of research and analysis, originality)	50	30
	Research question (definition of objectives, plausibility of hypotheses)	15	9
	Theoretical framework (methods relevant to the research question)	15	13
<i>Total</i>		80	52
Minor Criteria			
	Sources, literature	10	10
	Presentation (language, style, cohesion)	5	4
	Manuscript form (structure, logical coherence, layout, tables, figures)	5	4
<i>Total</i>		20	18
TOTAL		100	70

Plagiarism-check (URKUND) match score:

[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):

The author has selected a surprisingly interesting, very ambitious and, at the same time, somewhat controversial topic for her BA Thesis. Perhaps more importantly, she has chosen a topic which she personally finds interesting and important, in other words, which she really cares about. Her thesis also testifies to the fact that she must have spent a lot of time and energy researching and thinking about this topic. The scope of the thesis, measured in the breadth of its topic, its actual length or, more importantly, number of works cited, is quite impressive. At the same time, it contains many interesting insights and arguments.

Nevertheless, the overall argument of the thesis is unfortunately not completely persuasive for a couple of reasons, which will be explained below.

Definition of the aim and objectives of the thesis

The author's aim is to critically analyse Walzer's theory of distributive justice with special emphasis on his notion of *complex equality* with the aim to define its alleged shortcomings with a sort of 'deontological corrective'. The alleged shortcomings, i.e. the communitarian (and therefore both particularistic and pluralist) form of Walzer's theory of justice nonetheless appear to be, at least in the eyes of the present reviewer, the very theoretical (or philosophical) foundations of Walzer's justice theory. The point obviously is that Walzer (at least implicitly) rejects the (Kantian) deontological approach to justice by claiming that justice can only be meaningfully discussed as an ethical practice of some actually existing community, rather than in terms of (universally valid and binding) moral duties imposed upon individual human beings.

While the author does apparently recognise this fundamental disagreement between Walzer on one side and Kant and his followers on the other side, she apparently fails to realise its importance for her own project. In other words, she does not question the feasibility of the proposal to fix the alleged shortcomings of Walzer's theory by fusing it with some form of Kantian deontological ethics.

Methodology and the use of sources

The author states that she intends to use "discourse text analysis" (in the sections devoted to Walzer's theory of justice) in combinations with "Robert Hanna's 'Kantian Philosophical Methodology'" (employed primarily in the sections devoted to deontology).

Here we face several problems. The first one appears to be mostly terminological and hence only formal: by the "discourse text analysis" the author actually means critical textual analysis. Much greater problem is the fact that in her analysis of Walzer's theory of justice she appears to rely mostly on secondary literature. As for the second method the author declared to use: Hanna's method could be fruitful for this kind of work. Nevertheless, the author apparently misrepresents the meaning of at least of Hanna's theses and, apart from that, the employment of his method is not apparent in any way. In fact the entire part devoted to deontological ethics consists of a discussion of various concepts of Kant's practical philosophy, which is apparently based almost completely on secondary literature.

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

Suggested questions for the defence are:

I do recommend the thesis for final defence.

Referee Signature

Overall grading scheme at FSV UK:

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