

**Book Review: Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?**

**By**

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In the book "Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?", Michael J. Sandel, a renowned political philosopher, offers a thought-provoking and engaging exploration of the concept of justice. Sandel's book is based on his popular Harvard University course, "Justice," and is designed to encourage readers to think critically about the nature of justice and its application in modern society. Michael J. Sandel's "Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?" is a profound exploration of moral philosophy, applying it to contemporary social and political issues. The book is based on Sandel's popular Harvard course, "Justice," which has captivated students and readers with its engaging and accessible approach to complex ethical questions.

The book is divided into 11 chapters, each focusing on a specific aspect of justice, including the meaning of justice, the social contract theory, Utilitarianism, Kantianism, Virtue ethics, distributive justice, global justice, justice and morality, Justice and politics, Justice and the common good, conclusion in form of doing justice

**Sandel's approach is characterized by several strengths:**

1. Accessible language: Sandel uses clear and concise language, making complex philosophical concepts accessible to a broad audience.

2. Engaging examples: He uses real-life examples, including court cases, political debates, and historical events, to illustrate philosophical theories and spark critical thinking.
3. Multifaceted perspectives: Sandel presents various philosophical perspectives on justice, encouraging readers to consider different viewpoints and think critically about their own beliefs.
4. Encourages reflection: The book prompts readers to reflect on their own values and principles, fostering a deeper understanding of justice and its relevance in everyday life.

Some of the key themes and insights from the book include:

1. The complexity of justice: Sandel highlights the multifaceted nature of justice, demonstrating that it encompasses more than just legal compliance.
2. The importance of moral and political philosophy: He emphasizes the significance of philosophical inquiry in understanding and addressing contemporary social and political issues.
3. The tension between individual rights and the common good: Sandel explores the delicate balance between individual rights and the common good, encouraging readers to consider the ethical implications of their choices.
4. The need for ongoing reflection and dialogue: The book concludes by emphasizing the importance of continued reflection and dialogue in the pursuit of justice.

**Put differently, Contentwise:**

1. **Utilitarianism:** Sandel begins with the philosophy of utilitarianism, which suggests that the best action is the one that maximizes overall happiness. He explores the implications of this theory through various scenarios, such as the infamous trolley problem, which challenges readers to consider the morality of sacrificing one life to save many.
2. **Libertarianism:** The book then shifts to libertarianism, emphasizing individual rights and the importance of personal liberty. Sandel critiques this perspective by examining issues such as taxation, free markets, and individual freedom, questioning whether a purely libertarian approach can lead to a just society.
3. **Kantian Ethics:** Moving to Kantian ethics, Sandel explains Immanuel Kant's focus on duty and moral principles over consequences. He discusses Kant's categorical

imperative, which asserts that actions must be universally applicable and respect the inherent dignity of individuals.

4. **Rawlsian Justice:** The discussion of John Rawls' theory of justice introduces the concept of the "veil of ignorance," a thought experiment that asks individuals to design a society without knowing their own position within it. This approach aims to ensure fairness and equality by removing personal biases from considerations of justice.
5. **Aristotelian Virtue Ethics:** Sandel also explores Aristotle's view that justice is about giving people what they deserve based on their virtues and contributions to society. This perspective emphasizes the development of moral character and the importance of community and civic engagement.
6. **Moral and Political Dilemmas:** Throughout the book, Sandel applies these philosophical theories to contemporary moral and political issues, such as affirmative action, same-sex marriage, physician-assisted suicide, and the moral limits of markets. These discussions are designed to show the practical relevance of philosophical ideas and to illustrate how different theories of justice can lead to different conclusions.

In conclusion, "Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?" is a thought-provoking and engaging book that encourages readers to think critically about the concept of justice. Sandel's accessible language, engaging examples, and multifaceted perspectives make the book an excellent resource for scholars, students, and anyone interested in exploring the complexities of justice. This book is recommended for readers interested in philosophy, political science, ethics, and social justice. It will appeal to scholars, students, and anyone seeking a deeper understanding of the complex issues surrounding justice.