*BOOK REVIEWS*

*Justice: What’s the Right Thing to Do?* is a full transcript of Michael Sandel’s courses on justice in Harvard, which have earned him the title of “one of the most popular teachers in the world”. The book aims to provide readers with a thorough exploration into the definition of justice and righteousness. By giving vivid examples and quoting abundant philosophers’ theories, from Immanuel Kant in the eighteenth century to John Rawls in the twentieth century, Sandel challenges both our convictions and what is widely recognized as common sense and those notions we still take a grain of salt with. In this book, Sandel not only builds up an abstract theoretical system, but also holds up a mirror to the society and reflects something specific as well.

Many of the given cases and examples in the book trap readers into dilemmas where none of the choices seem to be the so-called best answer to the question. However, better than making fool of readers through tricky situations, Sandel is actually leading readers to think, judge and evaluate whether an action can be called justified in three perspectives—welfare, freedom and virtue. These three perspectives are the main standards of a justice evaluation. What Sandel promotes is that justice should be morally acceptable, and the emphasis on morality can be found throughout his thoughts and philosophies toward economic, political and public life. He holds the belief that justice is not only about the distribution of capitals, but also about how we treat and evaluate things. Politics that’s morality-based is essential for a society of justice.

*Justice* isn’t strictly catalogued as a philosophy work. Nor does it always provide a final answer. However, I’ll definitely recommend this book because it helps break our mindsets, stereotypes and boundaries in an almost disturbing way. Readers will set a brand-new principle and standard of evaluation over controversial topics after reading it.

Book Review of *Justice: What’s The Right Thing To Do*

Based on one of Michael Sandel’s legendary Harvard courses that has inspired millions of people, *Justice* is like a ticket to the brand-new world of philosophy and moral reflection. The book implies profound meaning of three ways of thinking about justice: maximizing welfare, respecting freedom and promoting virtue.

Through Michael Sandel’s explaining profound theories in simple languages, readers can mentally enjoy a superb voyage of philosophy. Not placing expert concepts mechanically, Sandel creates various vivid cases skillfully blended in the matched theories. Just as the classical runaway trolley case mentioned in Chapter 1 indicates, whether the killing can be justified is indeed a question. Some moral dilemmas arise from conflicting moral principles, however, Sandel presents readers with sharp comparisons, in-depth analyses as well as novel but powerful assumptions to subtly explain the contradiction.

Additionally, what refreshes readers is that Sandel transforms moral philosophy by putting it at the heart of civic debate and breaking stereotypes. Rather than pushing readers to follow his own ideas, Sandel makes use of his ideas to motivate readers to challenge the thoughts taken for granted and also raises thoughtful questions: Should there be limits to personal freedom? Is the market fair？Isn’t it wrong to exploit a human being’s vulnerability, taking his life without his consent even if doing so benefits others?

To my regret, profound thoughts no longer share the priority and popularity in our modern society. More or less, people have been accustomed to making external show pass for clean shrines. But I do believe Sandel’s masterpiece will illuminate us readers’

lives. All in all, the book is well worth reading. Just dive in it and follow Sandel’s lead, and a new world will be waving to you.

**Book Review of** *Justice: What’s the Right Thing to Do*

**Justice: What’s the Right Thing to Do**, an epic book written by Michael Sandel who teaches at Harvard University and is one of the famous political scientists and writers in the world, will take us into the thrilling world of Justice and have a great impact on our lives.

**Justice** is bound up with competing notions of glory and virtue, pride and recognition. At the same time, Justice is not only about the right way to distribute things, but also about the right way to value things. From an age when we're confused but full of energy, when we're passionate but don't know where to go, we are eager to expand our understanding of political and moral philosophy, as well as test long-held beliefs in justice. **Justice** eases such an embarrassment and guides readers to think critically about the fundamental questions of justice, equality, democracy and citizenship. We can learn about the great philosophers of the past — Aristotle, Kant, Mill, Locke from Justice and then apply the knowledge to broaden our horizons and solve complex, sometimes volatile modern-day issues, including affirmative action, same-sex marriage, patriotism, loyalty and human rights.

"No one can compel me to be happy in accordance with his conception of the welfare of others," Kant writes," for each may seek his happiness in whatever way he sees fit, so long as he does not infringe upon the freedom of others" . I believe that **Justice** is capable of taking readers of all ages and political persuasions on an exhilarating journey to confront today's political and moral controversies in a fresh and enlightening way.

We judge **Justice** as a great literature not because we like the way it criticizes the reality, but because it resonates with all of us and engages our highest faculties to make us more fully human.

**Justice：What’s the right thing to do?**

Recently, the brilliant book ‘*Justice: What’s the right thing to do*’, written by Michael J. Sandel, has aroused readers’ great interest. Through describing some moral dilemmas that really happen in history and designing several specific circumstances for readers to explore, Sandel takes a step-by-step method, leading us to think deeply about how to judge what real justice is. After reading this book, no matter what job you are engaged in, you will be a beneficiary of it.

In this book, Sandel quotes many ideas of famous ancient philosophers from different genres, such as Bentham, Aristotle, Kant, Mill and soon. He uses interesting stories to explain their theories in an easy-to-understand way and then reconsiders justice from three angles: utility maximizing, libertarianism and a theory between the first two. Utilitarians think that people should sacrifice the interests of a few people for the sake of the majority whereas liberalists think freedom belongs to everyone so whatever reason we have we have no right to hurt anyone in the world. And it is the core problem that we will be faced with in a moral dilemma, so Sandel tries to teach readers how to reflect on such situations through his unique analyses.

What’s more, Sandel not only puts forwards many thought-provoking questions and analyzes the theories behind them, but he also takes many hot issues of society as examples to make his discussion more realistic and readers more empathetic. He guides us to find out the contradiction of things happening around us so that we will learn to change our fixed mode of thinking as well as view a problem from different perspectives.

On the whole, ‘Justice’ is a book full of critical thinking and worthwhile to peruse. It’s beyond doubt that readers will get something beyond their imagination.

**A REVIEW FOR *JUSTICE: WHAT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO***

*Justice,* written by Michael J. Sandel, is a great work that arouses tricky, headachy problems but does reflect the harsh reality.

The book is based on some hot issues in society, and also some common phenomena, raising some intractable problems. The author advanced layer upon layer and dragged out distinct values, in which way analyzed the issues deeply. Those topics are so controversial that no one can draw the conclusion easily. Though still unable to tackle these problems, the author gives us some approaches to them, providing some branches of ideas for us to judge what is justice.

The author introduced three approaches to justice, which is maximizing welfare, respecting freedom and cultivating virtue. They do have close relationship with justice, but may conflict with each other sometimes.

Take the first case for example, the author listed three kinds of views on the controversy aroused by the inflated price during the disaster time. The outraged consumers just regard the sellers as vultures. While the economists hold the ground that there is nothing unfair. As the price of goods in transaction is no longer governed by intrinsic value, but supply and demand in the free market, the so-called "just price" doesn't make sense any more. Now the price depends on the value people bestow on the goods. Besides, the exorbitant price can encourage the suppliers to provide more, thus ensuring the rational allocation of resources. They think that it's the government that should take the responsibility. However, the third voice shifted their attention to virtue. Each party has their own standpoint , their own "justice" to defend, which determines their way of thinking about justice, making it really difficult to tell right from wrong in such a tough situation.

Seeing the same problem from three distinct levels and angles leads to separate views. The author do throw our thoughts into a tough situation.

Sometimes, it seems that the judgements people make does make sense, but actually, it's more of an instinct based on his or her own value, experience and humanity, and most importantly their standpoint.

In the book, Sandal put forward many controversial cases, together with some thought-provoking conceptions, as mentioned above, which is worth dwelling on for every one of us.

The book, *Justice: What’s The Right Thing To Do,* written by Michael J. Sandel, explores the strengths and weaknesses of three different ways of thinking about justice. The first one is utilitarianism, whose supporters state that the right thing to do is to maximize welfare. Next comes libertarianism, divided into two rival camps —the laissez-faire camp and the fairness camp. The last one is virtue theories, which is often identified with cultural conservatives and the religious rights.

To enable readers to cultivate their own views about justice, the writer analyzes several thought-provoking cases. Take the story *The Afghan Goatherds* for example. An American special forces team met two unarmed Afghan Goatherds accidentally during a secret mission in Afghanistan in search of a Taliban leader. The group chose to let them free instead of killing them. However, it turned out that the soldiers had made the wrong decision. The Taliban fighters were then informed, leading to the failure of the mission and the death of several American soldiers. Readers can’t help falling into deep thought: How can we justify whether a person is innocent? If we can’t, is killing someone who may be innocent right? Otherwise, is it worthwhile to set suspected enemies free at the risk of losing our comrades? What should we do in such moral dilemmas? What is the right thing to do? What on earth is justice? Thus, with the cases given, readers are likely to feel confused and conflicted while reading the book.

However, the writer offers no definite answer. He just lists the strengths and weaknesses of the three approaches to justice. Just as he writes in his book: *Its goal is not to show who influenced whom in the history of political thought, but to invite readers to subject their own views about justice to critical examination*. All he wants is to inspire readers to think on their own and reflect on different judgments critically.

To sum up, what makes the book worth reading is that it enables us to revise our judgment about the right thing to do and rethink the principle we initially espoused. It does provide much food for thought for readers.

Book Review Of *Justice：What’s the right thing to do*

With observations and reflections on the current state of society and some moral dilemmas, Harvard professor Michael Sandel writes *justice: what is the right to do*. In this book, the author guides readers to think systematically and construct their own view of justice.

Generally speaking, moral dilemmas may be troubling to everyone, but it's not easy to think about them systematically and objectively. A lot of times we judge what to do by experience. And rarely think about where do these so-called experiences come from and why. But in this book, the author introduces the connotation and essence of the concept of justice to us through some simple life examples. He explains different people's choices on justice from different angles and gives their behaviors dialectical, philosophical thinking.

What gives readers the deepest impression was Sandel's ingenious way of writing in which he does not present his views from his own perspective, but always asks questions and inferences from the standpoint of various philosophers. He invited Aristotle, Rousseau, Bentham, Locke, Mill, Kant, and other philosophers to take part in this philosophy feast that enables us to grasp their wisdom and their attitude toward justice.

Perhaps thinking about these for the present life doesn’t have much practical significance, but it let us always remember to reflect .Our experience and inherent values are not necessarily right, and looking at things dialectically can make us reflect more widely and further.

In a word, this book provides us with a new perspective on justice and enables us to think critically about moral issues. Bacon once said: philosophy makes people profound. By reading this book, readers can have a deeper understanding of philosophy and justice.

**A Review of *JUSTICE：What’s the right thing to do***

*JUSTICE What’s the right thing to do*, written by Michael Sandel, considers the role of justice in our society and our lives and introduces a mass of reviews on how to judge justice. The purpose of this book is to encourage readers to critically examine their ideas about justice in order to understand what they are thinking and why. Reading this book is a journey to confront political and moral controversies in a fresh way.

It is a brilliant book as the author develops his discussion with vivid examples, from abortion, euthanasia and same-sex marriage, to patriotism, dissent and affirmative action， which may happen around us. Through these examples and questions readers think along with the author. Philosophy is only abstract and intangible thinking and seems to have no real connection with our life. However, the author perfectly connects philosophy with our life and his explanation is simple and clear, so we won’t feel bored. For the first chapter *The Runaway Trolley*, the author introduces utilitarianist and categorical thinking. He sets three situations to choose whom to save. Then his questions make you confused about whether your choice is right. In short, the author challenges what you have already known with new ideas to overturn your rigid thinking.

As far as I am concerned, it is well worth reading, since it leads us into profound thinking over justice. The author doesn’t give us an answer for what real justice is but the book teaches us to think dialectically through reasoned debates, so it motivates our thinking and benefits our mind.

A Review of *Justice: What’s The Right Thing To Do*

Different from those exhausting philosophical books, *Justice: What’s the Right Thing to Do* written by Professor Michael J. Sandel, has a miraculous power to make readers immerse themselves in the deep thinking of ‘justice’. The book is based on a public class in Harvard, and its rich connotations make it worthy of being read millions of times. By listing plenty of real examples and introducing diverse views, Sandel offers readers an immersive way to explore what’s so-called justice when trapped into moral dilemmas. And what’s more attractive and unique is that there are no standard answers in the book, which means readers can express their own points without limits and divergent thinking will be developed free from rigid systems.

Among all these vivid examples, the most riveting one is the Runaway Trolley. Between the two choices, it seems that neither is perfect. Is justice just a matter of counting the number of lives, of weighing benefits and costs? Will we feel shamed when being faced with the decision we have made without hesitation? Readers will feel puzzled and doubtful, and some may reflect on the human nature and morality. And that’s what Sandel aims at.

Actually, owing to the indigestible content, numerous people always avoid reading books on philosophy. However, there’s no doubt that *Justice* will totally explode their inherent concepts. Though it is a book integrating strictness with logicality, its understandable words improve its readability.

All in all, distinctive opinions upon justice are introduced and thoughtful debates are displayed in this classic work. It successfully leads readers to a peculiar perspective on moral issues and broadens their horizons at the same time. *Justice* is such an extraordinary book worth reading again and again!

Written by Michael J.Sandel , *Justice* is an influential book which explores the definition of justice. Based on the popular series of courses given at Harvard University, the book refers to the problems of welfare, freedom and virtue. By taking concrete examples and comparing different theories, it makes readers think critically about the question——What’s the right thing to do?

Instead of forcing his own standpoints on readers, Michael supposes several situations that readers are involved in and guides them to make choices. Then he analyzes some possible choices of readers in order to guide them to rethink whether their choices are just.

Among all the cases, the most heart-touching one, obviously ,is “The Runaway Trolley. Reading this case, readers are involved in several similar but totally different situations related to choice of living and death. In all those situations, they have the ability to decide whether they should sacrifice one person to save that other five. During the process, some problems emerge. Is one person less important than five people? Why do we have different choices even though the possible consequences are the same？After that, the writer reveals the reasons why sacrificing one person seems to be right in the first case but wrong in the second.

What’s the right thing to do? All of us, including Michael, cannot answer it absolutely correctly. However, providing various opinions, this book helps readers form their own definition of justice, which is also the most important value of the book.