

**BOOK REVIEW OF *JUSTICE***  
**A PHILOSOPHICAL BOOK OF MICHAEL J. SANDEL**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

People often seek for philosophical ideas to justify what they believe as the right thing to do. Many people believe that philosophical ideas matter to enrich their knowledge in order for them to think more wisely. It is why many books of philosophy are nowadays out to fulfill the demand from the society. Even if, many sources are also available to meet the people's interest in philosophy such as reading articles, watching movies and many other, average reasonable people would rather to choose to read books as their source to get philosophical idea. It is also the reason why today we have many philosophical books traded in the market and we can find them easily in many book stores, like *Solitude*, *Voltaire*, and etc.

In this paper, the writer chooses to review a book by Michael J. Sandels, entitled *Justice* which was published in 2008, as one of the most well-known philosophical books in America (Rauch, 2009). It has many interesting pick-up-lines which make the writer impressed to begin with. In addition, the book also has a lot of things to do with the writer's career in debate, which it broadens the writer's point of view. Basically the book portrays an interesting theme which is glorifying the idea of what the right thing to do, which often becomes a substantial problem in society to determine which virtue and vice are. In this book, the author often begins the writing in each sub-topic by giving an analogy of case which mostly happened in the United States, so it makes easier the readers to digest what actually the writer wants to deliver.

## **2. SUMMARY OF *JUSTICE***

In the book of *Justice*, the premise begins with examples and cases which prompt the readers to take a stance on whether or not an injustice has occurred. These cases include issues of price gouging (increasing prices in the face of great need, e.g. after a natural disaster) and of the recent bank bailouts. Having discussed the likely reactions that people have to such cases, Sandel proposes three ways in which we could account for our beliefs about justice: (i) the idea that justice involves maximizing welfare, (ii) that it involves always respecting some aspect of personhood, and (iii) that ideas of justice involve ideas about promoting 'the good life'.

### **3. REVIEW OF *JUSTICE***

The writer wants to deliver the review in a divided discussion of its strength and weakness.

#### **1. The Strength of *Justice***

In this worldwide most wanted book, there are four interesting parts which the writer wants to investigate as the strength of the book. They are the title, the content, the acknowledgment, and the diction. The writer will start from the title first, in which entitled “Justice”, which relates to equality or fairness. The writer sees that Sandel put it as the title to generalize all the contents in the book which is related to justice and its system. It is proven by all chapters that he chose to discuss in the book, such as the happiness principle (utilitarianism), libertarianism, morals, and the case for equality. All of the discussions from each chapter also contain many investigation of how a case or issue should be considered as fairness to the society. Similar to the title, the contents of the book are also very interesting to analyze. When the writer once read the book from page 1 to the following, the writer felt to be immensely compelled by the discussion in the book. Such situation happened because Sandel always put a case as a prolog in each chapter. For some people whose interest is in philosophy, it is an interesting thing to know a history or important event which finally composed a philosophical value.

As an instance, on page 58 of the book, Sandel writes, “Each fall, *Forbes* magazine publishes a list of the four hundred richest Americans. For over a decade, Microsoft founder Bill Gates III has topped the list, as he did in 2008, when *Forbes* estimated his net

worth at \$57 billion. Other members of the club...”, to give a portrayal of libertarianism value.

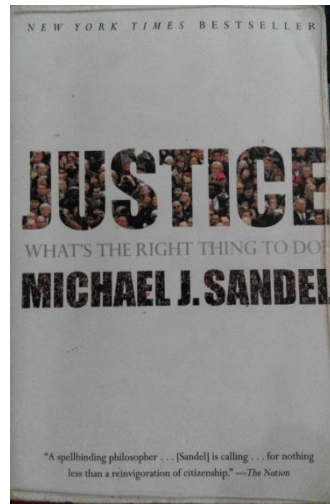
The latter issue that becomes the strength of the book is the acknowledgment. The writer finds many interesting testimonials completing the success of the book.

Lastly, aside from the three aforementioned elements which become the strengths, it is the diction which completes the book to be more interesting to read once and continuously. In the book of *Justice*, Sandel chose mostly uncommon terms which are rarely used by people writing in English.

The latter thing to also take into account as its strength is the evidences written which mostly derived from cases happened United States. As one of the world’s best seller books, it is important to reflect evidence with the value that wants to be portrayed. In the book of *Justice*, Sandel puts many evidences to show why certain value exists which mostly they happened in the United States. It becomes so interesting, since Sandel looks so consistent.

## **2. The Weakness of *Justice***

After investigating the book holistically, the writer finds two things that become the book’s weaknesses. Those are the paper used and the setting of analogy of the book.



(Picture 3.2.1 Cover of *Justice*)

#### 4. CONCLUSION

*Justice* is a great philosophical book in general. It is proven by how global reaction took the table at the beginning of its launching which many philosophical enthusiasts found the book alone well-satisfying and vividly clear answering several philosophical values.

At the end, the writer concludes that the book is more than worthy to buy, especially if we are seeking for philosophical ideas in general and craving for detailed explanations as well as understandable flow of discussion.

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