

Alma Deutscher In A Society Where Talents Belong To All

I have just been inspired by a gift of God to the human race: [Ms. Alma Deutscher](#). This genius has a talent which is not her property, per John Rawls,* but belongs to all humans and is to be enjoyed by all humans. This young lady is not to be made rich through selling the produce of her talents, but rather is to be given all resources necessary for her to develop her talent and to spread its beauty throughout the world. She should have sufficient funds to be content and at ease and able to function and produce and develop ... but no more

* Rawls' thesis, called the "difference principle," is presented in Michael J. Sandel's [Justice: What Is The Right Thing To Do](#): "The 'difference principle' represents, in effect, an agreement to regard the distribution of natural talents as a common asset and to share in the benefits of this distribution whatever it turns out to be. Those who have been favored by nature, whoever they are, may gain from their good fortune only on terms that improve the situation of those who have lost out. The naturally advantaged are not to gain merely because they are more gifted, but only to cover the costs of training and education and for using their endowments in ways that help the less fortunate as well. No one deserves his greater natural capacity nor merits a more favorable starting place in society. But it does not follow that one should eliminate these distinctions. There is another way to deal with them. The basic structure of society can be arranged so that these contingencies work for the good of the least fortunate.”**

** One arrangement, for example, would be to pay doctors more to practice in poorer and uninviting areas, e.g., in Appalachia, but not to pay them more for being cosmetic surgeons in rich and desirable and prosperous areas.

A related thought: in most of the world throughout history, and in many cultures even today, this young girl's talent would not have blossomed nor have been recognized, for it belongs to a woman, a young girl. How much incredible talent and genius have we kept buried under the sexual prejudices of the male!*

* And not to speak of the prejudices against Blacks and homosexuals and earlier even left-handers!

Finally, with respect to loving one's neighbor as one's self and recognizing all people as neighbors (per Jesus), Christians should enthusiastically embrace the thinking of John Rawls and seek to make a nearer heaven on this earth now rather than just focusing on a future heaven. Consistent with this I note that I, like many people, have more wealth than I will likely have need of, but I can't just give it away because unforeseen circumstances may indicate that actually I do not have enough, e.g., some severe illness or extended nursing home care. For in this present world life is pretty much each person on their own, and we are restrained by fear.* But if we had a widespread sharing of resources in a system consistent with Rawls' thinking, then it could work somewhat like insurance,** and I could put my wealth in a common pool for the benefit of all, and if later I actually needed more, then I could ask for it and receive it. Such a system would be consistent with what Jesus is telling us in Matthew 23:37, namely what life could be like if he could have his way: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those

who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!"

* See also [Prince of the World](#). And [Jeremy Lin](#) of "Linsanity" on how to encourage both cooperation and competition without need for money; and also this moving story about an [8 year old Nigerian refugee chess playing champion](#), and this [sequel](#) and [this](#) also. And here is a New York Times article about [taxing wealth](#) for the common good. And finally consider this [artistic genius](#) who is four years old.

** Most people don't realize it, but insurance is very much like a socialist system, namely everyone pays the same thing (relative to value insured) and takes only according to need, e.g., only those suffering a fire loss obtain a monetary value from the fire insurance company

Afterthought. It just occurs to me that Rawls' thesis could be expanded in the following way: we let talents be included in the notion of resources in general, and then assert, à la Rawls, that all resources belong to the species and not to the individuals.* Accordingly all resources will be utilized for all. Since such a communalism works better with a family, Christian conversion of the world would, in my opinion, be very helpful (especially a Christianity where, as mentioned above, the focus is on improving this present world and not just attaining to a future world). And then the remaining challenge would be organization and management. And here the sort of competition suggested by Jeremy Lin of a previous footnote would be very helpful.**

* This seems also to be reminiscent of Rousseau in his *Second Discourse*, where he states "The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, to whom it occurred to say '*this is mine*,' and found people sufficiently simple to believe him, was the true founder of civil society. How many crimes, wars, murders, how many miseries and horrors Mankind would have been spared by him who, pulling up the stakes or filling in the ditch, had cried out to his kind: 'Beware of listening to this impostor; You are lost if you forget that the fruits are everyone's and the Earth no-one's'."

** Kant makes an interesting distinction in religions between "theoretics" and "practice." The former, with respect to Christianity, would include such as the assertion and meaning of a Holy Trinity or the arguments between predestinationists and free-willers. With respect to practice, Christianity is very simple: love one's neighbor as one's self (where all people count as neighbors) and do not expect God to do what humans are capable of doing themselves.***

*** See [The Gist Of Christianity](#) (page xxviii) and also [Jesus without a Stenographer](#).

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