

A teacher wants to get across to her students the evils of redistribution.
She believes redistribution is a socialist, communist, liberal plot to undermine America.
It is the doctrine of moochers and takers not makers and shakers.
It makes people dependent and fails to "incentivize" them for success.

Redistribution is an out and out evil.
Unfair, unjust, immoral, and unconstitutional.
It undermines the very foundations of society.
It kills the desire to work hard for low wages.

"How fair would a grading system be that made the A's give points to the B's and C's
and D's,
And, God forbid, even to the F's!" she says.
"That's how redistribution works.
The people who earned it have to give to those who didn't."

Of course, students in a course and people in America do not all start at the same
starting line.
Some, with privileged backgrounds, start already many yards ahead.
Others start way behind the line.
The teacher calls it a fair race nonetheless.

Some earned their A through hard work,
But others earned their A by starting well ahead.
Some earned a C because they started way behind
And made more progress than any of the A's.

The teacher is right but in the wrong direction.
For the last many decades wealth in America has been redistributed up not down.
The rich have taken from the middle class and the poor,
And in the act have surpassed the Age of the Robber Barons.

The rich raided everyday people's bank accounts once Glass-Steagall was repealed.
They created a lucrative poverty industry out of payday loans, check cashing, and
usurious credit cards.
They harvested companies by laying off workers, lowering wages, and raiding pension
funds.
They made derivatives out of liar loans and foreclosed on homes.

They bought politicians, got subsidies, cut health care, and left the rest of us with the
bill.
They claimed they had "earned it" when they had inherited wealth or had famous
parents.

They demanded meritocracy for others, but no inheritance tax for their kids so they would not have to compete.

They colluded to rig Libor rates and raise CEO pay, but decried unions.

They had the Supreme Court pass Citizens United so the corporations and the rich could steal elections.

They sought to restrict voting, just in case their money wouldn't turn the trick.

Then they claimed the election was stolen when they lost,

Because it was their God-given right to win.

So the teacher was confused about who the moochers were.

If redistribution is a Commie plot, then our rich are Commies through and through.

Though I suspect the teacher is happy with the rich taking from the rest of us,

After all, they're rich, so they MUST be smart, as any social Darwinist knows.

For our teacher, downward redistribution—the sort Christ was for—is evil.

And upward redistribution is good, since when wealth trickles down to the poor the rich can take it again and "grow" the economy. Our teacher probably calls herself a good Christian,

But she is in fact a devout Milton Friedmanian.

For the record, trickle down—supply side—economics is a fraud and economies grow by consumption.

Workers with no jobs or bad wages can't buy anything.

See, it had nothing really to do with morality but only with capitalism,

A system we should try.

A system we should try.

In the 21st Century there is another case for downward redistribution beyond consumption.

It is a sort of Christian argument on steroids for helping those who have fallen behind.

Today our world is imperiled by complex systems and fierce conflicts.

The earth and the human species are challenged as never before.

You don't slay a dragon with an A.

It takes a team whose strength is no better than its weakest link.

Faced with the dragon's fire, you can bet that the best gives to the worst to get them up to speed,

Before the whole team is burnt to a crisp.

If you're a warrior fighting at the dragon's feet,

You don't ask whether the healer was once a slacker or deprived,

You damn well see to it he will be ready to save you when you are about to die,

And vice versa.

That's how to survive a major dungeon in the World of Warcraft.
And that's how the army takes a hill in a bloody battle in the desert, though in America
rich kids don't go to war.

You redistribute your butt off until everyone is the best they can be.
The team becomes better, smarter, and sometimes braver than anyone in it.

Then you don't just get a silly A, you gain victory.
The guild gives you the best drop.
And the army gives you a medal for saving not just yourself but all of us.
You earned it, but you couldn't have done it without the team.

The battle for the earth and for life on our planet,
For the survival of the human species,
Is already joined.
The dragon is at the gates.

Don't bring your A to the battle and brag about it,
Or your money and tell us how hard your parents worked to give it to you.
Bring the respect you won when you buffed your team mates so they could help you
save the day.
When the dragon roars, you need people to watch your back, not admire your golden
ass.

If you don't believe this, as I know you won't,
See what happens when you stand before the dragon alone and show him your A.
Tell him the others are not there because they didn't get an A.
As you perish, you might even scream, "It's isn't fair, they weren't as good as me".

Ah, but I hear you say, "I've got you now,
I will bring a team of only A's,
People all as good and smart as me.
People who towed the line and did what they were told".

Too bad you didn't know this particular dragon was impervious to a team of only
standard skills.

What you really need now is that screwed up dwarf,
The one you earlier denied drops you really didn't need.
What he might have become is what you need now to save yourself.

"But, surely", you say, "Helping should be a matter of charity,
Not the government or the team telling me what to do".
You are right, you should not be forced on the team.
You can sit it out and hope those you wouldn't help will help you.

But perhaps I'm wrong,
And you'll be just fine,
Alone with your own kind.