

should be used when thinking about the methodology of experimental economics rather than the old theory testing paradigm. In conclusion this is a book that is well worth reading and deserves a wide audience.

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doi:10.1017/S0266267110000507

The Right to Exploit: Parasitism, Scarcity, Basic Income, Gijs van Donselaar. Oxford University Press, 2009. ix + 195 pages.

Judged by its likely consequences, the case for an unconditional basic income appears rather strong. If this unrestricted and universal grant reaches the level of sufficiency, it might reduce or end poverty, facilitate care giving and volunteerism, increase the bargaining power of labour, and decrease the administrative cost of transfer programmes. Government might shrink even as the position of the least advantaged group rises. Well-being would increase.

But, from the beginning, critics have objected that these gains in welfare, if they materialized, would come at the expense of fairness. Some able-bodied recipients of an unconditional basic income could be expected to lay about and shirk productive labour. They would take rather than give and thus live at the expense of those whose taxable labour generated the necessary cash. The symbol of this alleged parasitism is the lazy surfer, the modern-day grasshopper who would exploit the unconditional grant that had been paid for by the industrious ants. Even if the experts were convinced its implementation might make the world a better place, there is good reason to think the taxpaying majority would reject a universal guaranteed-income scheme as patently unfair.

To defeat this objection, Philippe van Parijs constructed his real-libertarian argument that purports to show individuals have a moral

right to the highest sustainable basic income. If this is what distributive justice requires when we start from liberal presuppositions, then it cannot be unfair to distribute a generous and unconditional basic income to every single individual, whether grasshopper or ant. The grant is an entitlement of membership, like the right to vote, and is not contingent upon willingness to work. It is a rightful inheritance, the per capita share of the common wealth of the society that includes, most importantly, the employment rent accruing undeservedly to jobholders in our non-Walrasian world.

This is a fascinating argument, but its adequacy as an account of what distributive justice requires on the egalitarian plateau has been widely challenged. Some point out that the real-libertarian philosophy and the redistributive scheme it was designed to legitimate are inconsistent with a basic principle of reciprocity that ought to govern any fair system of social cooperation. As Stuart White explains, 'Those who willingly enjoy a decent minimum of the economic benefits of social cooperation without satisfying their suitably adjusted reasonable work expectation violate the principle of baseline reciprocity, and thereby take unfair advantage of – i.e., exploit – those citizens who do satisfy this expectation' (White 1997: 320). The lazy surfers, in other words, are indeed mooching grasshoppers whom the industrious ants are right to resent. If a basic income is owed to society's members, it is owed only to the cooperators and not to the parasites. He who does not work, neither shall he eat.

It is to this company of critics that Gijs van Donselaar belongs. Indeed, he was one of the first to work out this sort of objection to van Parijs's real-libertarian case for the citizen's wage. Many of the arguments polished in this slim and impressive book first appeared in the author's thesis, which circulated under the title *The Benefit of Another's Pains* (van Donselaar 1997). Its arguments have already been discussed in several articles on the basic income controversy (Widerquist 2002, 2006), but Oxford University Press has performed the service of making van Donselaar's important contribution more readily accessible. Even if the book does not persuade every reader, it will certainly instruct and also inspire admiration for its clever arguments.

Only the last three of the volume's six chapters are concerned with the argument for an unconditional basic income as a requirement of distributive justice. Van Donselaar's critique of that proposal is but one implication of a basic principle of distributive justice which this book seeks to explore – the principle prohibiting parasitism in social relations. This principle is dubbed the Lockean proviso. It was first formulated by Robert Nozick in *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* and then operationalized by David Gauthier in *Morals by Agreement*. Van Donselaar adopts Gauthier's conception of parasitism at the start and then proceeds to show what follows from this principle. If we agree that parasitism so defined is unjust, then van Donselaar demonstrates that various arguments set

forth by Nozick, Gauthier, van Parijs, Ronald Dworkin, and others are defective. In a world that prohibits parasitism, property rights would be contingent and limited, resources would go to those who will use them most productively, socialist collectivization would be ruled out, and jobs would be shared but no able-bodied person would be guaranteed a basic income.

John Locke would probably be surprised by the implications contemporary philosophers have deduced from his famous qualification to the right to claim as one's own things with which one has mixed labour in the state of nature: 'at least where there is enough, and as good left in common for others'. As Gauthier points out, 'the proviso prohibits bettering one's situation through interaction that worsens the situation of another' (Gauthier 1986: 205). That's what parasites do: they take but do not give, which harms their victims. What the Lockean proviso rules out, then, is taking advantage of others when this exploitation worsens their plight. The third chapter of the book demonstrates that this interpretation of the Lockean proviso is consistent with John Locke's original intent.

According to van Donselaar, Gauthier 'has captured, by his formulation of the Lockean proviso, a sound principle of justice in its own right' (p. 7). This principle proscribes parasitism. Formally stated, a parasitic relation exists if 'A is worse off than she would have been had B not existed or if she would have had nothing to do with him, while B is better off than he would have been without A, or had nothing to do with her, or vice versa' (p. 4). Such relationships represent a gross violation of the broader principle of reciprocity because 'some gain through others while the others lose out' (p. 5). Robbery and extortion are examples of coercive parasitism, but in his analysis van Donselaar focuses on noncoercive forms of the parasitic relationship in which the initial distribution of assets between agents makes it possible for one to strike voluntary but exploitative trades with the other that set back the latter's interests.

Van Donselaar begins with Gauthier's definition of parasitism but then shows that some of Gauthier's quasi-libertarian positions actually violate this proviso. Rightly construed, 'the Lockean proviso will restrict the notion of private property to just those things the possession of which does not and cannot worsen the position of another person compared to my absence. Hence, it will restrict the right to private property to my own person in the narrow sense of those things that would have been absent in my absence' (p. 35). Self-ownership and competitive markets aren't parasitic, but van Donselaar concludes that 'we cannot at once have a security against parasitism and fixed rights in external resources' (p. 56). Instead, the Lockean proviso requires that we put 'resources in the hands of the people who can be expected to use them most productively' (p. 58). The historical theory of entitlement – or first-come, first-serve – is not a valid justification for control of assets because it would permit

parasitic usurpers to live off the labour of others. In a world reconstructed in conformity with the Lockean proviso, van Donselaar says, 'it is ability and willingness ... that justify rights in resources' (p. 63). Absentee landlords, trust-fund babies, indigenous peoples, tenured professors, and other social parasites, beware!

But the form of parasitism to which van Donselaar devotes the greatest space is the lazy surfer and the basic income that feeds him. What he tries to show is that 'the right to exploit one's nuisance value is an essential element in the argument for an unconditional basic income' (p. 163). The lazy surfer, or 'non-needy bohemian' (p. 153), does not want to work and thus has no independent interest in employment but is nonetheless assigned by van Parijs an equal share of the employment rent that constitutes the bulk of society's external or common wealth. This is like dividing a lush island equally between two survivors (Lazy and Crazy) and allowing the one who does not intend to work all of his plot (Lazy) to rent the unused portion to the other (Crazy), who wants to make productive use of it. The rent Crazy pays affords Lazy an unconditional basic income, but only because Lazy was awarded control of an asset that was worthless to him unless he could trade it for the leisure he craves. Lazy exploits Crazy in a parasitic way if he exchanges his wasteland for a 'labour-free income' (p. 149) because Crazy would be better off if Lazy didn't exist but the opposite is not true. As van Donselaar explains, 'the hard core of the injustice is that people are allowed to hold ownership rights over productive opportunities for which they have no independent interest. Equalizing the opportunities for foul play is not the same thing as removing them' (161–162). There is something fundamentally feudal about the citizens wage proposal, van Donselaar wryly observes. It bestows an asset, external wealth, upon the indolent that is valuable to these parasites only because this asset is coveted by the industrious, who would like to work it. The basic income payments that are extorted from them are like feudal dues. Hence the slogan of the basic income movement, van Donselaar says, ought to be 'Everyone a liege lord' (162).

The Lazy–Crazy scenario was invented by van Parijs to demonstrate the distributive justice of the unconditional basic income proposal, but van Donselaar exhaustively analyses that case in the book's fourth chapter, which is helpfully illustrated with numerous diagrams depicting different distributive options. He shows that no equal and envy-free distribution of external assets will also be Pareto optimal and nonparasitic (137). Though the analysis of these two-agent cases is technical, van Donselaar does his best to make the exposition clear and engaging. In addition to Crazy and Lazy, we encounter along the way Upstreamers and Downstreamers, Cattle Ranchers and Corn Farmers, Train Lovers and Car Lovers, and Long and Strong, who trade gin and juice. There is also an

illustrated discussion of how to be a parasite at the post office (130–132). Given the difficult ideas it investigates, van Donselaar's book is unlikely to be accessible to the wider audience he would like to reach (15), but the author cannot be faulted for trying to make the abstractions with which he is concerned as concrete as possible. The moral of the story about the parasitic nature of the basic income scheme is nicely illustrated at the end of the book: 'suppose A wants to take an exam in political philosophy next week while today B rushes ahead to the library to borrow the last copy of the *Second Treatise* only to hire it out to A for a handsome figure. Then, in my view, B would be abusing his borrowing rights, and he would be abusing A. He would be morally wrong to do so. This is what the book argues' (174).

But the question is whether the lazy surfer who exploits the basic income programme to live a life of leisure is really the equivalent of the academic entrepreneur described by van Donselaar who extorts payment for the use of a book others need but he doesn't. Both are parasites according to Gauthier's definition because those who pay them would be better off if they didn't exist, but van Donselaar never stops to ask whether Gauthier's conception of parasitism is satisfactory or the only alternative. The book begins by stipulating what parasitism is and then shows what conclusions follow from this stipulation, but it doesn't consider a rather obvious objection to the stipulation. If outcomes alone determine whether an agent is or is not a parasite (A would be better off without B but B would be worse off without A), then some might conclude that the old, the young, the disabled and the helpless are parasites when the able-bodied and industrious are required to support them out of their earnings. Taxpayers might think they would be better off without the recipients of various transfer programmes but the opposite is not true. So construed, the Lockean proviso seems to drive us back from van Parijs's real-libertarianism to real libertarianism of the Nozickean sort, which was its birthplace. Van Donselaar appears to recognize in the last section of the first chapter ('So Be It') what for him is a rather uncomfortable implication of this definition of parasitism. He notes, correctly, that 'if we take the fate of the individual in the state of nature as the benchmark for a distinction between right and charity, then, most plausibly, taxes and transfers in support of the lame and the blind should count as charity, not as right' (13). But only a Nozickean libertarian will think that benchmark is morally satisfactory and van Donselaar himself acknowledges on the next page that he believes 'there are sound arguments for the moral requirement to help those in distress, even arguments for the political enforcement of that requirement' (14). But that concession seems to undercut the challenge he issues to advocates of transfer-payment programmes: 'those who want to argue for solidarity with the wretched as a fundamental moral principle will need to argue that the Lockean proviso, on Gauthier's interpretation

of it, is of limited moral significance or at least not exhaustive of all that is of moral weight' (14). In other words, liberal egalitarians will need a different conception of parasitism.

As Tommie Shelby points out, another way to define parasitism is to emphasize process and not merely outcome. This alternative 'focuses, not so much on the distribution of benefits and harms to exploiter and exploited, but on *how* the exploiter obtains whatever benefits he does from the exploitee and on *why* the exploitee ends up parting with something that costs so much to acquire' (Shelby 2002: 390). On this view, parasitism is not merely one-sided and harmful (in the sense of setting back one's interests) but must also be unwanted, undeserved and illegitimate. For the liberal egalitarian, the distribution of labour-free incomes to the helpless that are mandated by a democratic government will not count as parasitic – however much neo-Lockean taxpayers grumble – because the recipients did not force themselves upon their benefactors or extort payment from them in the manner of van Donselaar's library huckster. Even though the outcomes are the same, the two cases aren't comparable. The democratic public, or at least the majority faction of it, chose to redistribute income, no doubt because it thought there was a moral obligation to do so. The minority of anti-redistributive libertarians might oppose this choice and think they would be better off without so many additional mouths to feed, but the democratic majority needn't worry they are facilitating parasitism – as long as they haven't exempted themselves from paying the necessary taxes. The legitimacy of the decision-making process nullifies the charge of exploitation.

But if that is true, then the case of the lazy surfers is no different. If the democratic majority is persuaded that well-being would be enhanced through the provision of an unconditional basic income and it decides to implement such a programme, it would be wrong to categorize as parasites those recipients who surf all day and eat Ramen noodles at night. They haven't forced themselves upon taxpayers, or extorted unproductive rents, or exploited their nuisance value to live at others' expense. Van Donselaar's critique of unconditional basic income might be valid in the fantastical world of Crazy and Lazy imagined by van Parijs, but it doesn't apply to any actually existing democratic society that might choose to bestow a citizen's wage. Admittedly, it is difficult to imagine a society like the United States ever legislating a universal basic income, even if the consequentialist case for this measure was strong. But if the public did make this choice, it wouldn't be because its slacker minority had extorted the concession parasitically. Hence, van Donselaar's argument is really beside the point.

But even on the mythical island of Crazy and Lazy, it is problematic to describe any bargain they might strike as exploitative in the moralized sense. To exploit another agent, that agent must first be exploitable in the

sense of suffering from some insufficiency. The most exploitable people are desperate. But neither Lazy nor Crazy seems desperate or exploitable. Their island contains more than enough resources for both to survive and thrive. Lazy can only take advantage of Crazy because Crazy has a mania for work, but unless this mania qualifies as a genuine disability it is difficult to see how Lazy takes *unfair* advantage of her fellow islander. Crazy is like the art collector who simply must have a particular painting and pays an exorbitant sum for it. The seller will make a killing and may never have to work again, but the collector hardly seems like the victim of injustice. She isn't in the same category with the sweatshop worker or debt peon, both of whom are vulnerable to exploitation. What van Donselaar doesn't consider is that where there is no vulnerability, there cannot be hard bargains or wrongful exploitation.

Good books, however, don't have to be right. Their conclusions can be wrong but the reasoning may nonetheless be sharp and inventive. A book about the implications of the Lockean proviso is a valuable contribution to the literature on distributive justice. I don't think van Donselaar's work refutes the basic-income idea, but it does show why van Parijs's real-libertarian defence of this scheme is defective.

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doi:10.1017/S0266267110000519

Philosophy of the Social Sciences: Philosophical Theory and Scientific Practice, edited by C. Mantzavinos. Cambridge University Press, 2009. ix + 333 pages.

There are at least two reasons to recommend this book to the readership of the journal. First of all, this is *not* a reader or textbook on the