

Citizenship or Obligation:

Discussing the eligibility requirement for basic income

Karl Widerquist
Budget Analyst
The Educational Priorities Panel
225 Broadway, Suite 3101
New York, NY 10007-3001
Email: Widerquist@levy.org

Presented at the Basic Income European Network Congress, Berlin, October 2000

Abstract

Gijs Van Donselaar uses a novel definition of exploitation (A exploits B if A is better off and B worse off than either of them would have been had the other not existed) and a series of two-person examples to demonstrate that an unconditional basic income can be exploitative. This paper considers Donselaar's version of exploitation and the argument against basic income derived from it to show that Donselaar's argument against basic income fails on several counts: First, it ignores the value of citizenship, and it does not hold the level of scarcity constant. Second, it does not hold true if the two-person examples used to support it are extended to three persons. Third, it is unworkable in practice because it relies on unknowable information.

Preliminary draft: Comments requested and please do not cite or quote without the author's permission. For the revised draft contact Widerquist@levy.org.

Citizenship or Obligation:

Discussing the eligibility requirement for basic income

Clear evidence of the impact of the movement for basic income is apparent from the appearance of the first book aimed specifically arguing against basic income, *The Benefit of Another's Pains: Parasitism, Scarcity, Basic Income* by Gijs Van Donselaar, forthcoming. Although there are many books that argue against government redistribution of property in general, this is the first to argue against basic income in particular. This fact may make the book a more formidable challenge because it comes from a very pro-redistribution perspective. It advocates a very strong redistribution towards the least advantaged but argues that universal basic income without a work requirement is an unjust method of redistribution.

Donselaar's argument is aimed most specifically at refuting case for an unconditional basic income made by Philippe Van Parijs in his book, *Real Freedom for All*. Recall that Van Parijs argued for the highest sustainable unconditional basic income to maximize the real freedom of the least advantaged individual in society and that he took pains to make the case that an unconditional income would not exploit working citizens by any of several definitions of exploitation including Lockean exploitation, Lutheran (or Marxian) exploitation, Romerian exploitation, and others. Donselaar takes issue with the universality of basic income and he does so by coming up with a definition of exploitation (or parasitism) that Van Parijs does not address: A exploits B if A is better off and B worse off than either of them would have been had the other not existed (of if they had nothing to do with each other). One cannot simply dismiss Donselaar's definition by saying that another is the "true" definition of exploitation. All of the

different possible definitions of exploitation are legitimate concepts and deserve to be considered on their own merits.

This paper considers Donselaar's version of exploitation and the argument against basic income derived from it (part 1) to show that Donselaar's argument against basic income fails on several counts: First, it ignores the value of citizenship, and it does not hold the level of scarcity constant (part 2). Second, it does not hold true if the two-person examples used to support it are extended to three persons (part 3). Third, it is unworkable in practice because it relies on unknowable information (part 4). Finally, this paper concludes with a discussion of further issues (part 5).

Part 1: Donselaarian exploitation

To understand Donselaar's case against basic income, one must first understand Van Parijs's case for basic income. Van Parijs argues that the freest society is one that leximins real freedom. That is, it maximizes the freedom of the least advantaged individual to do whatever she might want to do. He argues that a basically capitalist economy with the highest sustainable basic income is the society that can give the least advantaged more real options than any other. He recognizes that this level of basic income would require substantial redistribution, which should be undertaken only if it can be done without exploiting other members of society. He judges that such redistribution is not exploitive because of the existence of "outside assets"—assets that no one alive created but that have monetary value, such as land and natural resources. No

one created these assets and so no one has an inalienable right to the return these assets generate.

Unfortunately, Van Parijs believes that land and natural resource taxes alone cannot raise enough revenue to support a substantial basic income, but he believes that there is another outside asset that can produce a large tax base—labor. But labor is not traditionally thought of as an “outside asset.” A person creates her labor income with her own effort and therefore should be entitled to the fruits of her labor and certainly should not be forced to share her efforts at least not with people who are not willing to put forth similar effort. No so fast, says Van Parijs; not everyone has the opportunity to put forth the same effort. In order to work in a capitalist economy a person first must find a job,¹ and jobs—especially good jobs—are often difficult to find. Therefore, Parijs concludes some part of the return from labor income can be considered the fruits of one’s effort and some portion of it can be considered the return on the asset of having a particular job. He advocates using a progressive income tax as the best approximation of taxing the asset-portion of jobs. This money can be used to sustain the highest possible basic income. This basic income must be unconditional (that is it must not have any work requirement), because to do so would reduce the freedom of the least advantaged to do whatever they might want to do.

Donselaar does not object to taxing outside assets, to the redistribution of income, or treating jobs as assets; he objects to the unconditionality of the basic income grant. This objection comes from two principles, which he often states as if they are synonymous. The first is an objection (or at least a limitation) to the concept of real freedom; the second is an alternative definition of exploitation that Donselaar believes

basic income violates. First, he objects to the concept of real freedom (the freedom to do whatever one might want to do) on the grounds that freedom should be limited to exclude situations in which one uses her right to an asset (even legitimate rights) to extract the product of someone else's labor without putting forth effort herself. Rights are abused if one sells a right to which one has no interest in. Donselaar uses an example to illustrate this point. A farmer diverts the stream running through his property solely to get his neighbor to pay him to return the stream to its natural flow. According to Donselaar this transaction would have been acceptable if the farmer had some private reason to divert the stream, but if he does it solely to get his neighbor to pay him to stop, he is a parasite and he is abusing his rights. Therefore, society has the right to protect itself from such abuse.

Second, Donselaar offers a criteria by which society can judge whether the relationship between two people is parasitic or not: A exploits B if A is better off and B worse off than either of them would have been had the other not existed. Let's call this Donselaarian exploitation and it will be the only kind of exploitation discussed in this paper. Donselaar argues that to the extent jobs can be considered an outside asset, they are different than other assets because the asset owner cannot get any return job without putting forth effort himself. Therefore, Donselaar believes only those who are willing to put forth such effort should be entitled to a share of the return on such an asset, and thus, only those who are willing to work should be entitled to redistribution from labor income. According to Donselaar, the basic income recipient (who does not work) is better off and the laborer is worse off than either of them would have been if the other had not existed (or if they had nothing to do with each other). He then concludes that an unconditional

¹ Or suitable self-employment.

income is an unjust abuse of rights and should be replaced by substantial support only for those who are willing to work.

Using this standard Donselaar easily demonstrates that one of the examples Van Parijs uses to support basic income (the story of crazy and lazy) is exploitive. Crazy and Lazy are the only two inhabitants on an island. They recognize that both have equal claim to the land of the island. Lazy prefers to work as little as possible and grows only enough crops for subsistence, using less than her half of the land. Crazy prefers to work as much as possible and wants to use as much land as possible to produce enough crops to live in luxury. The two strike a deal in which Crazy farms all of the land and gives Lazy enough crops so that she can subsist without working at all. Van Parijs judges this transaction to be fair because both benefit from it relative to how well off they would be with the same property rights and without the exchange.

Donselaar, who uses a different basis of comparison, judges this transaction to be exploitive on the following basis. If Crazy was on the island all by herself, she would be better off because she could farm the entire island without sharing anything with Lazy. Lazy, however, would be worse off if Crazy was not there because she would have to work to produce her own subsistence. Lazy is better off and Crazy is worse off than either of them would have been had the other not existed. This is Donselaarian exploitation. This is also Donselaarian abuse of rights. Lazy has sold land, for which she had no private interest. Lazy does not need her half of the land. She doesn't really care what happens to it. She should simply farm the portion she needs for her own subsistence and let Crazy have all of the rest free of charge. It does not matter, from Donselaar's perspective, whether Lazy is the legitimate owner of half the land or not. Selling an asset,

which she has a legitimate right to but no private interest in (her land), allows Lazy to obtain control over an asset she has no legitimate right to (Crazy's labor).

The next section demonstrates that Donselaarian exploitation can exist in the Crazy-Lazy story only if the value of citizenship is ignored and only if scarcity is not held constant.

Part 2: Donselaarian exploitation, scarcity, and the value of citizenship

Under Donselaar's definition, for Crazy to be exploited by Lazy, Crazy must be worse off than she would have been had Lazy not existed. It is clear from the above example that Crazy is *materially* worse off than she would have been had Lazy not existed, but is that enough to say that Crazy is worse off *in total* than she would have been had Lazy not existed? Would Crazy be better off with a few more goods but with no other human being to interact with all day, every day, for the rest of her life? Would Crazy not be driven insane by loneliness? Donselaar's conclusions, therefore, rest on the belief that citizenship has no value; that the only contribution that a human being makes to society worth mentioning is her work effort. Social interaction, raising children, painting pictures, or any other nonmarket activity simply has no value in Donselaar's setting. If one recognizes that all human action, except for criminal activity, makes a positive contribution to our society and our culture, the idea that someone is a parasite simply because they do not participate in the economy disappears.

Because Donselaar sees no value in Citizenship it is easy for him to use as a basis for comparison, the position at which the other person simply does not exist and to

believe that this is not different than using a position at which the two had nothing to do with each other (p. 3). But the two are very different bases for comparison. Donselaar reaches the conclusion that Crazy is (materially) worse off than she would have been if she had had no contact with Lazy only by assuming that had there been no contact Crazy would own *all* the natural resources and there would be one less mouth to feed. He is comparing a position of low scarcity to a position of high scarcity with technology held constant, and he is blaming the increase in scarcity entirely on the basic income recipient. Essentially he is asking the poor to materially justify their existence (their share of natural resources). Let us instead use as a basis for comparison, the two having had nothing to do with each other, but let us hold the level of scarcity constant. Imagine that there was an impenetrable barrier in the middle of the island. Crazy would farm all of his land, but only half as much land would be available to him. Lazy, would farm small piece of his land and leave the rest vacant. It is quite clear that both are better off trading with each other than the would be in this case and so despite the so called abuse of rights, there is no exploitation.

Using as a basis for comparison the position in which the other person does not exist creates another problem that is discussed in the next section. The fact that Donselaar ignores the value of citizenship is itself ignored through the rest of this paper to show that the Donselaarian definition of exploitation is insufficient even if applied solely to material well being.

Part 3: The ambiguity of Donselaarian exploitation in a multi-person example.

Donselaar draws conclusions about a complex modern economy with a class-based society by using simple two-person models and he makes little or no attempt to extend the model even to three persons except to show that the person being exploited need not be a party to a transaction. In fairness to Donselaar it should be noted that Van Parijs draws conclusions about a complex modern society largely from two-person examples as well. However, this paper attempts to show that while Van Parijs's conclusions seem to be fairly robust, Donselaar's do not hold if the model is extended even to three persons. This section shows that Donselaarian exploitation may simply be undefined in a three-person model and the next section shows that even if such exploitation can be defined, it may be an unworkable standard by which to judge human action, much less to condemn basic income.

The feature that makes a two-person model unique in this context is that if one person no longer exists it is quite obvious what happens to her property: it goes to the other person. If A disappears B owns everything. But if more than three people exist the question of what happens to one person's property if she no longer exists becomes ambiguous. If A disappears does B or C get A's property? This ambiguity can lead to a situation in which every person exploits at least one other person and every person is exploited by at least one other person in a given distribution of income or it could lead to a situation in which someone must be exploited in all possible distributions of income.

The standard that one must be better off and another worse off seems to be very straightforward and it would not seem to lead to any ambiguities, but this does not prove true in a multi-person model as the following example demonstrates. Consider first, the apparent straightforward existence of Donselaarian exploitation below. Suppose if both A

and B exist, both have one 1 unit of well-being each. If A did not exist B would have 2 units, and if B did not exist, A would have 0 units. This is a clear violation of Donselaarian exploitation. A is an exploiter; B is exploited and there should be legal action to prevent this exploitation from happening. The situation can be summarized in the following table:

	A	B
Both exist	1	1
A does not exist	-	2
B does not exist	0	-

Now let us not change what happens to A or B; let's just add a third person C. Let's say that if all three exist C has one unit of well-being just like A and B. Had A not existed, C would have 0 units. Had B not existed, C would have 2 units. Had C not existed A would have 0 units and B would have 2 units. So all we will do is add a row and a column to the table above to create the following table:

	A	B	C
All three exist	1	1	1
A does not exist	-	2	0
B does not exist	0	-	2
C does not exist	2	0	-

There is no longer an obvious exploiter. A exploits B, B exploits C, and C exploits A. In the two person example above it seemed obvious B was the victim and A was the parasite. Here we have not changed what happens between A and B in the slightest, we have simply added C who exploits A and is exploited by B. If all people can both exploit someone and be exploited by someone, then this concept of exploitation is not terribly useful in judging an economic system nor is eliminating it a sensible goal. The only way to eliminate Donselaarian exploitation in the above example would be to have a distribution in which all people have zero units of well-being; this is the only distribution in which no person is better off and no person is worse off than they would have been had the other not existed. Yet, it would be hard to make the case that everyone having nothing is better than everyone having something.

Another problem created by having a multiple persons involves dealing with people in similar circumstances with different tastes. This is not a problem for Van Parijs because his goal is to maximize an individual's freedom to do *whatever* she might want to do. But it is a problem for Donselaar because he believes rights to property should vary depending on what people want to do with those rights and why. Using the Donselaarian principle to make decisions on such issues may create situations that would strike most people as intuitively unfair.

To understand why, return to the Crazy-Lazy example but replace Lazy with Hippie. Hippie has both a strong aversion to labor and a weak commitment to environmental preservation. Hippie believes that both he and Crazy should farm as little as they need for subsistence and leave the rest of the island in its pristine state. The two

could strike a deal in which Crazy farms three-fourths of the island, leaving one-fourth of the island in a pristine state. She gives enough of her produce to Hippie so that he does not have to work at all and she still has enough left over to live well above subsistence. Hippie has not abused his rights. He survives without working but his claim on Crazy's labor comes from the exchange of an asset for which he does have a private interest. Nor has anyone been exploited; neither one of them is better off than they would have been had the other not existed. But notice that Crazy's consumption level is actually lower when she is on the island with Hippie (who doesn't exploit her) than it would be if she were on the island with Crazy (who does exploit her). It is a strange concept of exploitation when one is better off when not being exploited than when being exploited.

This example also reveals the difficulty of equating abuse of rights with Donselaarian exploitation. Crazy is clearly worse off than he would have been had Hippie not existed. Hippie has clearly not abused his rights, but depending how much he enjoys not working relative to seeing most of the island farmed, Crazy's existence may or may not make Hippie better off than he would have been had Crazy not existed. Therefore Hippie may or may not have exploited Crazy.² Donselaarian exploitation does not necessarily imply abuse of rights and as we will see in a later section, abuse of rights does not necessarily imply Donselaarian exploitation.

Things get more difficult if the Crazy, Lazy, and Hippie are all on the island together. If the three of them all believed in the principle of avoiding Donselaarian exploitation, Lazy would have to work for his own subsistence but Hippie would not. Hippie and Crazy can strike a nonexploitive deal in which Crazy farms extra land and

² Assume from here that being better or worse off refers only to material well-being and that exploitation refers only to Donselaarian exploitation.

gives some of the produce to Hippie, but Lazy and Crazy can strike no such deal. Lazy has no interest in land except for that which she uses to produce her own subsistence (and there can be no mutual gain in trading that amount of land). Thus, Crazy would work most of the land, giving some of her produce to Hippie who would not work at all, while Lazy works just enough to support herself. Although this distribution is free of Donselaarian exploitation, it may not seem fair to Lazy. She has as much claim to the land as Hippie, but she has no right to sell her portion, she must give it away. Van Parijs believes that such a policy should be rejected because it would amount to rewarding people for having expensive tastes. He spends a great deal of time defending his position on this issue, but despite the clear difference of opinion, Donselaar does not defend his position against the criticism that it rewards people for having expensive tastes.

Is there any distribution that treats Crazy and Lazy equally without violating the principle of Donselaarian exploitation? Yes, but not one that is also Pareto optimal. The three of them could divide the land equally and allow no trading of land. Hippie and Crazy would farm what they need to survive and Crazy would farm all of his third of the land. Hippie and Crazy would both be worse off than they would be had Lazy not existed, but Lazy would be no better and no worse off than he would be otherwise and so he cannot be said to be exploiting anyone. But this distribution prohibits a mutually beneficial trade between Crazy and hippie that would leave no one worse off.

The inhabitants could instead decide that both Lazy and Hippie are entitled to the same compensation from Crazy for his use of additional land. Both Hippie and Lazy would receive the same unconditional income; Lazy would be exploiting Crazy, but Hippie would not. Alternatively, they could decide that environmentalism is not a

legitimate property interest. Lazy and Hippie would be forced to work for their own subsistence while Crazy would farm all of the rest of the land, keeping the produce for himself. In this distribution, however, Crazy would exploit Hippie relative to the distribution in which land was not tradable. (Crazy is better off, and Hippie is worse off, than either of them would be if land was not tradable.) It is quite possible that all three citizen's would prefer the distribution in which both Hippie and Crazy receive an unconditional income to the one in which land is not tradable, but this is prohibited by Donselaar's ethical standard. An ethical standard that makes all three worse off is not terribly useful.

Quite obviously Lazy would have a lot to gain by saying that she is also an environmentalist. If so, no one would that she is exploiting Crazy. This is a problem of putting Donselaar's standard into practice even if it were workable in theory. The practical problems of using Donselaar's standard are the subject of the next section.

Part 4: The difficulty of using Donselaarian exploitation even if it does exist.

Even if we ignore the value of citizenship, and do not hold scarcity constant, and consider only distributions of property in which a clear case of Donselaarian exploitation could be said to exist, it too difficult in practice to tell whether exploitation exists in a particular situation, to make Donselaarian workable standard for judging whether a particular action or policy is just or unjust. This section discusses problems with putting Donselaarian exploitation into practice beginning with the following example. This example is drawn from a similar one by Donselaar (p. 136-142), which he admits is far-

fetched but it is useful because it illustrates a kind of property relationship even if the particulars of the story are unrealistic.

Suppose you are waiting near the back of the line for service in a crowded post office. Margarita is waiting at the front of the line. Tom walks in, obviously in a hurry. Margarita sells Tom her place in line for \$10. Has there been an abuse of rights? Are you the victim of Donselaarian exploitation? Yes, no, or don't you know?

The only correct answer here is that you do not know. I haven't given you enough information to know. Remember, to know whether Donselaarian exploitation exists you need to know whether anyone abused their rights and whether anyone is better off and anyone else worse off than they would have been had the other not existed. To know this, you need to know something more about Margarita, Tom, and yourself. First, you must know why Margarita was in line. What difference does it make *why* Margarita was in line? Using Donselaar's standard we cannot say that Margarita's action was wrong just by knowing what her action was, we must also know *why* we she did it. If she was in line because she really wanted service at the counter then she had an independent interest in her place in line and she then can sell her place in line without any chance that she exploited you. She has not abused her rights. It makes no difference to you whether you wait for Tom or Margarita and so you have no reason to object to their transaction. Of course, no one but the individual truly knows her own motivation. She can tell us why she did what she did, but will she give us an honest answer? Any ethical standard that requires asking a person why they did something before judging whether that thing is right or wrong, will either give unscrupulous people many opportunities to abuse their rights or it will prohibit ethical people from legitimately using their rights. If there is no

way to give the parties incentives to truthfully reveal their motives, any standard requiring knowledge of motivation is unworkable in practice.

Suppose you know that Margarita got in line solely with the thought of selling her place to someone else. She then has sold an asset that that she has no independent interest in, a clear abuse of rights. Now can you say whether Donselaarian exploitation exists? No, here is a case in which abuse of rights does not necessarily imply Donselaarian exploitation: you still need to know something about Tom. What would Tom have done if Margarita did not exist? Suppose, if he knew that he could not buy his way to the front of the line, Tom simply would have arrived earlier. Whether you wait behind Margarita or behind Tom you have to wait behind the same number of people, and therefore, you are no worse off than you would have been had Margarita never existed. This illustrates a serious problem with using Donselaarian exploitation as a standard to judge any real world activity: it relies on too many subjunctives—too many “would have beens.” You cannot know whether you have been wronged unless you know what the other person (or persons) would have done if they would not have done what they have actually done. These things are not just difficult to know (and not just difficult to say); they are impossible to know with any accuracy, and therefore Donselaarian exploitation is an unworkable standard.

Suppose you know that Margarita got in line solely to sell her place to the highest bidder and you know that if Margarita had not been there, Tom would have come at the same time and waited behind you. Now can you say that you have been exploited? Not necessarily. Another thing you need to know is whether and how often you use Margarita’s services. If you know that you have never and will never use Margarita’s

services, then clearly she has exploited you. You are worse off than you would be if she did not exist (because you have to wait longer), and she is better off than she would be if you did not exist (because the more people there are waiting in line the higher the price she will get for her place in line). But suppose, nine times out of ten Margarita makes you wait a little longer, but sometimes you are in a big hurry and you are the highest bidder for her place in line. Most of the time she makes you wait a little bit longer, some of the time she helps you wait a lot less. On average she gives you piece of mind that you can get to the front if you really need to, but on balance is that worth the extra time that you have to wait most of the time? You don't know, do you? The counter-factuals that one has to know to employ the Donselaarian standard are just too great. One may never know in a given situation whether Donselaarian exploitation is happening or not. It is, therefore, impractical.

Does this difficulty apply to basic income? Yes it does. We know that taxes will go from workers to nonworkers if basic income exists, but do we know that workers have higher after tax incomes than they would if all those nonworkers entered the labor force and started bidding down wages? No. Does someone benefit from basic income if he is a net taxpayer for most of his life, but is a net recipient for part of his life? Does someone else benefit from basic income if he is a net contributor all his life but receives piece of mind from knowing that he will never have to fear poverty because of basic income? It cannot be shown conclusively that basic income creates any Donselaarian exploitation as Donselaar believes that it does.

Another problem with the Donselaarian exploitation standard is revealed by a slight change to this example. This standard condemns the same action if one person does

it but not if another does it. Suppose the postmaster gets wise to Margarita's game and decides to cut her out of the action. Instead of having people wait in line he has them bid to be the next one served. Anyone can go to the front of the line at any time by bidding for it. The postmaster is doing the same thing that Margarita was doing, he's making the same or more income that she was making from it plus his salary as postmaster, but has he exploited you? No, you still benefit, on balance, from the postmaster's existence. The fact that he sells places in line may not help you, but the fact that he posts your letters does help you. On balance, you are better off given that he exists than you would be if he did not exist; if you weren't better off, you wouldn't go to the post office. Therefore, it is impossible for him to exploit you. What use is an ethical standard that makes the same action, done for the same reason, with the same result, ethical if the postmaster does it, but unethical if Margarita does it?

Perhaps society could ban that portion of the postmaster's action that could be considered parasitic? This is not what Donselaar advocates. He recognizes that many jobs allow the jobholder to obtain an economic rent, but he believes that such a rent should only be distributed to people who are willing to do that job not to the consumers who pay the rent. The possibility that job-rent could come at the expense of consumers is not considered in *the Benefit of Another's Pains*. Only those who are willing to take a job are entitled to a share of the return that job can provide, according to Donselaar.

Notice also that all of the exploiters in this section have jobs. Margarita and Tom work hard to extract their exploitation from their fellow citizens. There are many occupations that may or may not create exploitation. Consider advertising. It may provide a valuable service by communicating information between firms and consumers, or it

may be a zero sum game, as in the following example. Suppose if no soap is advertised, I will randomly choose a brand; if one is advertised and the others are not, I will buy the one that is advertised; but if all brands are advertised I will be back to randomly selecting a brand. Soap manufacturers will have no choice but to buy advertising. They will see that their level of advertise is positively related to their sales, and they may be completely unaware that they are worse off (and the advertising companies are better off) than they would have been had the other not existed. Thus we know that advertising may or may not cause Donselaarian exploitation just as basic income may or may not cause Donselaarian exploitation. If we decide basic income is unethical because it may or may not cause Donselaarian exploitation, we must decide the same about advertising and a host of other occupations that have the possibility of creating Donselaarian exploitation.

Part 5: Conclusion and further issues

This paper has presented reasons to believe that Donselaarian exploitation is not a definable ethical standard in theory if the interactions of three or more people are considered. It has also argued that Donselaarian exploitation is not workable in practice even if it could be defined in theory, because of the inability for anyone to gather counter-factual information required to judge action using this standard. And, This paper has shown that even if Donselaarian exploitation could be defined and put into practice it cannot make a case against basic income unless the value of citizenship is ignored.

This, I believe, gives compelling reason to reject Donselaar's argument against basic income, despite the fact that other issues have not been touched (some of them

potentially even more damaging to Donselaar's case against basic income). Chief among these is the issue of class. There are no class divisions in any of Donselaar's examples, nor is there any discussion of a society with class divisions anywhere in his book. Donselaar's vision for society seems to be for a progressive form of capitalism in which a guarantee of employment (or compensation for the involuntarily unemployed) is the main form of support for the poor instead of a universal basic income. But he seems to envision that capitalism as it is would otherwise remain basically in place. However, he seems to be unaware that such an economy—unless it could be made perfectly equal or perfectly fair—would not be free of Donselaarian exploitation.

Working in a capitalist economy—unlike any of Donselaar's examples—means working *for* someone else. Most workers work for someone with more privileges and a higher social standing. If the social difference between owners and workers is at all influenced by brute luck or is anything less than perfectly fair, Donselaarian exploitation exists between the two. Donselaar seems extremely concerned that workers should not be exploited by basic income recipients, but no where does he mention the possibility that workers could be exploited by employers. He is either quite confident that the labor market can somehow be made into a perfectly fair institution, or he is special pleading.

Donselaar's standard in a sense is much more radical than real libertarianism, if it is applied to all possible Donselaarian exploitation in a capitalist economy. Real Libertarianism (maximizing the real freedom of the least advantaged through basic income) does not require eliminating all inequities that may make the labor market unfair; it requires reducing them only to the point where further reductions start to make the least advantageous person worse off. As long as the least advantaged person is not

forced to work, she cannot be exploited by brute luck inequalities. But if the least advantageous person is forced into the labor market, as Donselaar advocates, then she will be the victim of brute luck inequality and she will be exploited (in the Donselaarian sense) unless the labor market is perfectly fair. If no such labor market is possible, the only way to ensure that the least advantaged citizens are not also the most exploited citizens, is to release all citizens from any work requirement.

Bibliography

Van Donselaar, Gijs. 1997. *The Benefit of Another's Pains: Parasitism, Scarcity, Basic Income*. Department of Philosophy, University of Amsterdam.

Van Parijs, Philippe. 1995. *Real Freedom for All: What (if anything) can justify capitalism?* New York: Oxford University Press.

White, Stuart. 1996. "Reciprocity in Defense of Basic Income." Paper Presented at the BIEN Congress, Vienna, September.

White, Stuart. 1997. "Liberal Equality, Exploitation, and the Case for an Unconditional Basic Income." *Political Studies* 45, 312-326.

White, Stuart. 1999. "The Egalitarian Earnings Subsidy Scheme." *The British Journal of Political Science* 29, 601-622.

White, Stuart. 1999. "Social Rights and the Social Contract: Political Theory and the New Politics of the Welfare State." Unpublished manuscript.

Widerquist, Karl. 1999. "Reciprocity and the Guaranteed Income." *Politics and Society* 27, no. 3, 387-402.

1. Williams, Andrew. 1999. "Resource Egalitarianism and the Limits to Basic Income." *Economics and Philosophy* 15, 85-107.