

Contents

<i>List of the Contributors</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	x
1 Introduction	1
<i>Andrew Reeve</i>	
1.1 The reception of <i>Real Freedom for All</i>	1
1.2 A brief overview	2
1.3 The nature of a free society	4
1.4 (Unconditional) basic income	5
1.5 Measuring real freedom	6
1.6 Undominated diversity	8
1.7 Funding basic income and job assets	9
1.8 Exploitation	11
1.9 A world of basic income?	11
1.10 The search for social justice	12
Notes	13
2 Basic Income: Pedigree and Problems	15
<i>John Cunliffe, Guido Erreygers and Walter Van Trier</i>	
2.1 Introduction	15
2.2 Objections to <i>Real Freedom for All</i>	15
2.3 Charlier	17
2.4 State bonus	22
2.5 Conclusion	24
Notes	25
3 Self-Ownership and Equality: Brute Luck, Gifts, Universal Dominance and Leximin	29
<i>Peter Vallentyne</i>	
3.1 Introduction	29
3.2 The egalitarian liberal framework	30
3.3 Self-ownership and the limits of taxation	35
3.4 Social spending on the disadvantaged	40
3.5 Conclusion	48
Notes	48

4 Real Freedom and Basic Income	53
<i>Brian Barry</i>	
4.1 Some difficulties in the measurement of real freedom	53
4.2 Real freedom as real income	58
4.3 From real freedom to basic income	65
4.4 Some further problems with real freedom	72
Notes	78
5 Real Freedom and Basic Income: Comment on Brian Barry	80
<i>Robert J. Van der Veen</i>	
5.1 Introduction	80
5.2 Why leximin real freedom requires maximum basic income	82
5.3 Real freedom and achievable well-being	89
5.4 Pragmatic and principled defences of basic income	91
Notes	93
6 Should Surfers Be Fed?	95
<i>Richard J. Arneson</i>	
Notes	109
7 Resource Egalitarianism and the Limits to Basic Income	111
<i>Andrew Williams</i>	
7.1 Real libertarianism and resource egalitarianism	111
7.2 From resource egalitarianism to basic income	113
7.3 The restriction objection	116
7.4 Is restriction illiberal or unfair	117
7.5 Further replies	120
7.6 Undominated diversity	123
7.7 The slavery of the talented	125
7.8 Fair insurance	128
7.9 Against undominated diversity	130
7.10 Conclusion	132
Notes	132
8 Fair Reciprocity and Basic Income	136
<i>Stuart White</i>	
8.1 Introduction: basic income and the exploitation objection	136
8.2 The reciprocity principle	138

8.3	Fair reciprocity and the exploitation objection	142
8.4	Basic income as an instrument of fair reciprocity?	146
8.5	Variants of basic income	149
8.6	Conclusion: On the need to widen the scope of the basic income debate	154
	Notes	155
9	Compatriot Priority and Justice among Thieves	161
	<i>Hillel Steiner</i>	
	Notes	170
10	Is Democracy Merely a Means to Social Justice?	172
	<i>Thomas Christiano</i>	
10.1	Introduction	172
10.2	Instrumentalism	173
10.3	The rationale for instrumental evaluations of democracy	174
10.4	Social-justice-guided constitutional engineering	176
10.5	Disenfranchising the elderly	177
10.6	The Machiavellian approach	178
10.7	A puzzle about political equality	180
10.8	A critique of Machiavellian instrumentalism	181
10.9	Instrumentalism and inequality	184
10.10	Constitutional engineering as precommitment	186
10.11	A dualistic account of democracy	188
10.12	Democracy and the equal consideration of interests	188
10.13	Responsiveness and weak publicity	189
10.14	Equality and democracy	193
10.15	In defense of the narrow conception of political equality	196
10.16	Conclusion	197
	Notes	197
11	Hybrid Justice, Patriotism and Democracy: a Selective Reply	201
	<i>Philippe Van Parijs</i>	
11.1	A hybrid conjecture in the form of three principles	202
11.2	Undominated diversity, and why it is not enough	203
11.3	The maximin distribution of the value of external endowments	205
11.4	The proper place of solidarity	207

viii *Contents*

11.5 Patriotism in the service of global justice?	209
11.6 Democracy, a mere instrument?	212
Notes	214
<i>Select Bibliography</i>	217
<i>Index</i>	219

1

Introduction

Andrew Reeve

1.1 The reception of *Real Freedom for All*

In 1995, Philippe Van Parijs published *Real Freedom for All*, and was almost immediately greeted with considerable acclaim, as well as a great deal of critical attention.¹ Van Parijs's book has many merits, a number of which clearly contributed to its impact. First, Van Parijs's central contention is that justice demands that each individual receive a basic income unconditional upon his or her willingness to seek paid employment. There are few works that argue for the necessity of such a radical change in public policy in as original, and sophisticated, a manner as *Real Freedom for All*. Secondly, and connected with this first factor, Van Parijs draws upon, and illuminates, some of the most important debates within contemporary political philosophy. For example, he makes significant contributions to the growing literature on self-ownership, the relationship between liberty and equality, the currency of egalitarian justice and the nature of exploitation. Thirdly, as well as exploring these foundational issues, the book is also deeply concerned with how principles of justice are to be institutionalised, and draws freely on social science, including, in particular, economic theory. So, for example, Van Parijs discusses recent accounts of the microeconomics of the labour market, of aggregate demand management and of the behaviour of firms. Fourthly, Van Parijs's book is the fruit of many years' thought and defends itself against many objections that earlier versions of his argument provoked. As a result, it possesses considerable depth and continually challenges its readers to find additional objections to, or defects in, these new defences.

Acknowledging *Real Freedom for All's* many virtues – its depth and originality, its contribution to major debates and its interdisciplinary

appeal – is, of course, consistent both with outright rejection of its approach and with reservations about parts of the argument. It is, after all, a philosophical manifesto for a radical political position; and not everyone shares that radical impulse. As Van Parijs explains, he sets out from two convictions: ‘One: Our capitalist societies are replete with unacceptable inequalities. Two: Freedom is of paramount importance’ (p. 1). His book, he adds, ‘is primarily addressed to those who share’ these convictions with him. Not everyone does; but then they have to respond to his arguments accordingly. At the same time, many may indeed share those convictions, yet may still be unpersuaded by the conclusions he draws from them, or by particular steps in his argument.

The contributors to this volume provide a searching assessment of the main claims advanced in *Real Freedom for All*. They range from those who believe that Van Parijs is, as it were, ‘nearly right’ to those who think he is more nearly completely wrong. Van Parijs replies to his critics in a final chapter, thus taking the debate forward. The purpose of this Introduction is to outline the structure and content of *Real Freedom for All* as a preliminary to the comments and criticism to follow. Before we proceed to consider Van Parijs’s argument, however, some caveats are in order.

Although my task is not to provide a judgement on those arguments, or adjudicate about the debates in which he participates, it must be noted that even well-intentioned exposition amounts to interpretation, in part because of the need to be selective. *Real Freedom for All* contains 233 pages of main text, as well as 63 pages of footnotes. The majority of those notes provides additional argument, detail, nuance and caveat. It is clearly impossible to take all this into account in a brief summary. Secondly, interpretation of complex argument is often controversial and, as will become apparent, our contributors do not all read the book in the same way as each other, or as the author. Nevertheless, with these reservations in mind, I now turn to outline some of the main features of Van Parijs’s book.

1.2 A brief overview

The structure of *Real Freedom for All* needs to be seen partly in the light of the question stated in its subtitle, namely, *What (if anything) can justify capitalism?* Van Parijs’s title suggests that his main endeavour is to examine the rival merits of socialism and capitalism with respect to their capacity to instantiate a free society. A ‘free society’, for Van Parijs, is a just society – his *real libertarianism* conceives of justice in terms of distributing freedom. The distributive principle Van Parijs favours leads

him to argue that a universal basic income should be paid to each member of society, at the highest sustainable level. In addition to the redistribution implied by the payment of a universal and unconditional basic income, Van Parijs also defends a second form of redistribution, which is targeted at those with particular disadvantages, and designed to achieve what he terms *undominated diversity*.

An argument for a just distribution, of course, requires a defence of not only the recipient's entitlements but also the legitimacy of any 'taking' involved in obtaining the resources to be distributed. Because of concerns with feasibility, the size of the pool of resources to be so distributed is highly important. Its size, however, will depend not only on economic performance but also on which assets are taken to be legitimate sources for revenue. One of Van Parijs's distinctive contributions to debates about (re)distribution is to add a new asset to the relevant pool: *employment assets*. His idea, as will become apparent, is that those who hold a job have appropriated a (social) asset, just as if they occupied a piece of land, and are required to pay a fair price for doing so. The question about the rival merits of socialism and capitalism from which he sets out then become refined: is the best version of capitalism superior to the best version of socialism in passing the test of providing a free society?

As Van Parijs explains, for a society to satisfy that test involves it meeting three conditions: securing 'formal freedom', respecting self-ownership, and ensuring the greatest real freedom for those who enjoy least freedom. This last condition, he goes on to argue, requires providing the highest possible sustainable basic income, subject to the satisfaction of what he terms *undominated diversity*. When optimal capitalism is compared to optimal socialism by this complex test, Van Parijs concludes that there is a strong presumption in favour of some form of capitalism allied with 'democratic scale lifting' and 'solidaristic patriotism'.

Before going on to explain these claims, it is worth quoting here Van Parijs's penultimate paragraph, for it illustrates the sense in which *Real Freedom for All* is a radical philosophical text, along with the structure, just summarised, which we shall proceed to unravel:

The conclusion that emerges is that an earnest commitment to freedom – appropriately understood as real-freedom-for-all – does nothing to warrant complacency with the inequalities of existing capitalism. Nor does it give us any good reason – on plausible factual assumptions – to fight for socialism now ... Key issues for the future are rather whether, when, and how one should introduce an unconditional basic income, attribute redistributive powers to supranational authorities,

or constrain the organization of social life so as to nurture feelings of solidarity. These are the issues around which the crucial struggles of the future will be fought. It is the outcomes of these struggles that will determine the pace of progress towards more justice, towards greater real freedom for all.

(pp. 232–3)²

1.3 The nature of a free society

Having explained the overall structure of *Real Freedom for All*, and its author's answer to the question in its subtitle, we shall now look in more detail at the steps he takes to arrive at his conclusion. Since his initial question is 'If we wish for a free society, should we favour capitalism or socialism?', he naturally needs to tell his readers what they are to understand by 'freedom' and 'a free society'. But rather than provide these definitions, and then proceed to apply them to the workings of those rival socio-economic regimes, Van Parijs works towards an account of those terms by showing that there can be no a priori argument for either capitalism or socialism, and developing his account of freedom in the process.

The attraction of socialism as a fully democratic society is said to rest on confusing power with freedom; and worries are raised about the recognition of self-ownership in conditions of collective decision-making. Equally, *pace* those libertarians who would like to see capitalism as the necessary embodiment of a free society, Van Parijs claims that the libertarians who take that view suffer from 'rights-fetishism'³ – they use a moralised notion of freedom, and require a rule about legitimate original appropriation which is eminently controversial.

For Van Parijs, a free society is one in which its individual members are free rather than merely participants in the power of collective decision-making. Furthermore, he also rejects conceptions of liberty that conceive it to be the freedom to do one's duty or to mean autonomy. Freedom, for Van Parijs, 'includes' self-ownership,⁴ but he resists the cut-off between freedom and external resources emphasised by Hayek and others. Thus, while Hayek distinguishes the freedom to do something from the capacity to do it, Van Parijs wishes to make a connection between freedom and external objects by reference to the idea of opportunity, broadly construed. Although security and self-ownership are recognised by formal freedom, real freedom, he tells us, embraces opportunity as well. If all members of society are maximally free, we have a free society.⁵ The list of freedom-reducing obstacles to opportunity is, radically, fairly all-embracing – whether such obstacles are internal to

the person, whether they have been deliberately created, or whether they are either produced or removable by human action, they may still constitute restrictions on freedom.

As mentioned earlier, a free society is defined as one that meets three conditions. It provides security through properly enforced rights. It recognises self-ownership. Its structure of rights gives each person the 'greatest possible opportunity to do whatever she might want to do'. (It is important to note the 'might want' here.) This last condition raises a distributive issue because 'greatest possible' opportunity is to be provided to everybody. Van Parijs unpacks it not as maximum *total* freedom, nor *equal* maximum freedom, but as *leximin* freedom.⁶ Thus, the opportunities of those with fewest opportunities are to be maximised. If the opportunities of the person next on the scale of opportunity-holders can be increased without diminishing those with fewer opportunities they should be; if not, they should not be. And so on.

In addition to the lexical priority in the distribution of opportunities of those who have least, there is also a weaker priority relation between the three conditions. Security has priority over self-ownership, which in turn has priority over the principle of *leximin* opportunity. Van Parijs proposes that there will be instances in which small violations of his second principle of justice would be acceptable, if the gains in satisfying the third were sufficiently large. The model, we are told, is more left-wing than liberal-egalitarianism, but is not strictly egalitarian, since it is fully consistent with the justice of undeserved, and unchosen, inequalities in opportunities. It is also claimed to embrace equal concern for persons, neutrality with respect to individuals' conceptions of the good, and to be a particular interpretation of the implications of a concern with liberty, equality and efficiency.

1.4 (Unconditional) basic income

We now need to consider what satisfying these conditions might involve. Van Parijs tells us immediately that they require the payment of an unconditional basic income to all members of the political society. In the remains of this section, I summarise what is meant by a basic income, and why Van Parijs thinks it is required by his conception of a free society.

A basic income is paid to each 'full member' of society without reference to that person's existing resources, willingness to work, household membership, or location. Such a payment is quite obviously different from standard welfare-state payments, which are often means tested, depend upon a person's availability and willingness to take employment,

or relate to local considerations like levels of rent, or take into account the position of partners or others living in the household. It is a requirement of justice, for Van Parijs, that the government should disburse such a basic income. This is because a free society is identified with a just society by real libertarianism. The relation between ‘opportunity’ and income is twofold. Inasmuch as we think about opportunities to consume, then the money available defines the bundles of goods that can be purchased by a particular person. Inasmuch as we think about opportunities to live as we might wish, an unconditional income (at least of a certain level) adds to our choice-set the opportunity to consider the choice between work and leisure in a way otherwise unavailable. The inclusion of the irrelevance of willingness to work in the unconditionality, for Van Parijs, follows from a genuine commitment to neutrality between conceptions of the good. Although there has been discussion about whether some form of basic income would be a desirable policy device in the conditions of the modern (European) welfare state, Van Parijs’s claim, it also needs to be emphasised, is that the provision of the highest possible basic income financed by taxation on external resources is a requirement of any just society.

So far, of course, nothing has been said about the level of this basic income and, as if to emphasise the divergence in grounding between a Parijsian basic income and a welfare-policy-instrument basic income, he tells us that his own proposal might, depending on conditions, fall short of providing a subsistence level of income. Other issues also arise naturally enough, including how a basic income would impact on incentives. Since the basic income should be sustained across time – thereby raising problems of intergenerational justice, and demographic issues since we are dealing with a per capita income – Van Parijs modifies his requirement to demand the maximum *sustainable* basic income for each full member, subject to respecting formal freedom and self-ownership. The concern with sustainability makes it necessary to identify the tax structure that gives the highest tax yield that can be maintained under whatever socio-economic regime we are assessing. Van Parijs’s claim is that a real libertarian should assess the rival merits of different socio-economic regimes by reference to the highest sustainable basic income each can provide (constrained by the prior principles already mentioned).

1.5 Measuring real freedom

Van Parijs’s discussion thus far has been predicated on the assumption that each individual has the same talents and disabilities (or ‘internal

endowments'). However, he recognises that in our world this assumption is unrealistic. As with models in economic theory, we are invited to consider matters under simplifying assumptions, and then the consequences of relaxing them are examined.

Van Parijs's discussion of how to deal with variation in internal endowments appeals to the concept of undominated diversity. But before that discussion occurs, he addresses some of the critical responses directed against his conception of the justice-based requirement of a basic income in conditions of equal talent. As has already been mentioned, some key ideas contained in *Real Freedom for All* have been articulated in previous work by Van Parijs.⁷ Perhaps this discussion reflects not only his own anticipation of difficulties but also the reaction of his various audiences.

First, Van Parijs addresses two aspects of the 'delivery' of the universal disbursement, and asks whether it should proceed in cash or in kind; for example, in the form of services free at the point of consumption, which may count as components of the universal disbursement. Here Van Parijs allows for a certain amount of paternalism – a willingness to override individuals' actual preferences (as they might translate into choices) in favour of what they would genuinely desire if better informed (and so on). Hence, there could be a justification for compulsory health insurance (independently of another consideration about compulsory universal health insurance being cheaper to put into effect) (pp. 41–5). The same paternalism is deployed to deflect another obvious point about delivery, namely, that a basic income might be delivered as a lump sum rather than as a cash flow (an issue which has been considered in previous centuries) (pp. 45–8).

Van Parijs next confronts the problem of measuring real freedom (pp. 48–51). This is an issue at two levels: if we are to take the notion of leximin real freedom on board, we must be able to compare the real freedom of different individuals. And if we are to use the notion of real freedom for all to assess the rival merits of different socio-economic regimes, we must be able to decide which regime is superior by that standard. It is, of course, true that many reasons have been advanced to suggest that freedom cannot be measured. If you are free to do some things I am not free to do, and vice-versa, we seem to require some judgement about the comparative importance of particular freedoms in order to decide which of us enjoys greater freedom. Many of these problems about measuring freedom arise in the context of conceptions of liberty far removed from that advocated by Van Parijs. But he acknowledges the problem just stated and two others that flow from his conception of real freedom as opportunity.

Clearly we could say that only if one set of opportunities is a subset of another set of opportunities, then the latter is superior, and this is evidence of inequality. This is rejected, however, as too forgiving of inequality. The other approach, again rejected, would focus on preference-satisfaction. We could identify inequality by judging the preference-satisfaction individuals achieve from their bundles of goods. Van Parijs rejects this *welfarist* metric by appealing to what has become known as the *problem of expensive tastes*,⁸ which also recurs in his discussion of undominated diversity. The problem arises since a person with a particular set of 'expensive' tastes will find it harder to translate resources into welfare than someone who gains satisfaction from simple, inexpensive pleasures. This implies that more resources should be given to those with expensive tastes, and anti-welfarists, like Van Parijs, find that implication implausible.

So, the problem remains: how are we to measure real freedom (either interpersonally or as between socio-economic regimes like capitalism and socialism)? Van Parijs's own answer employs the idea of opportunity costs, at least under regimes of roughly competitive pricing. The weighting of any particular resource should reflect the cost to others of not being able to use it (p. 51). This argument has particular importance in relation to so-called job assets, as we shall see.

Though Van Parijs downplays this connection in his Reply, his approach has close affinities with a distributive principle known to economists as the *envy test*: equal freedom is not a matter of everyone having the same opportunities, but a matter of no individual preferring any other individual's opportunities. If there are properly competitive prices, and if nobody envies anyone else's bundle of external endowments, then there is equality. Departures from equality on the leximin principle would be justified by reference to this baseline (p. 53). (It must be remembered that the question of differential internal endowments is at present set aside.) For Van Parijs, if we can make a comparison between the real freedom a particular society can realise in two different states, we can compare two different socio-economic regimes.

1.6 Undominated diversity

The time has now come, in Van Parijs's argument, to abandon the assumption of equal internal endowments: talents differ, and some people suffer from handicaps, and so on. Recognising this point obviously means that a metric of external-goods-equality will no longer satisfy us. What is required, we are told, is a notion of distributive justice that goes

beyond the narrow confines of external resources without falling prey to the problem of expensive tastes which besets welfare egalitarian proposals. Van Parijs reviews suggestions by Ronald Dworkin and Bruce Ackerman in particular, and concludes that the best test requires the achievement of undominated diversity. This condition is satisfied if, taking each individual's package of internal and external endowments – or *comprehensive endowment* – into consideration, it is not true that *everyone* comparing the endowments of any two individuals considers those of one to be preferable to those of the other. Van Parijs does impose some conditions on this test, including that the preferences of persons are genuine and are generally accessible. 'Generally accessible' (p. 77) requires that preference schedules should be based on some reasonable level of understanding, and that they should not be simply opaque to other members of society.

The issue is bound to arise as to whether this test of undominated diversity licenses too little or too much redistribution. Since it requires that redistribution to the 'disadvantaged' occur only up to the point where there is *someone* who considers that the pairwise comparison is on par, it may appear not to go far enough. Van Parijs, however, seems to worry about the other problem: that it will absorb too many of the resources available for redistribution. Hence, he relaxes the condition such that if everyone benefited from violating the condition (because of the resource implications) it would be right to do so. In other words, if sustaining undominated diversity required a set of transfers and taxes the absence of which would make everyone better-off (in terms of real freedom), then accepting the dominated pattern would be recommended (pp. 83–4).

By now the argument of *Real Freedom for All* has established two methods of redistribution: one, targeted benefits licensed by the principle of undominated diversity; two, a universal basic income. As we saw earlier, any proposal for redistribution (in this framework) requires not only an argument (from justice) that particular persons should be its beneficiaries but also a justice-based argument for taking the resources to be redistributed. This is the next question Van Parijs confronts. What is to be the source of the fund from which both types of payment are to be raised?

1.7 Funding basic income and job assets

We may note the obvious point, that for a given fund, the greater redistribution required to secure undominated diversity the less is available for distribution as a basic income. Once again, Van Parijs distinguishes the situation when internal endowments are equal from the situation in

which they are not. The starting point is very wide and, for that reason, bears quotation. As Van Parijs explains,

What is relevant, from a real-libertarian standpoint, in this situation in which internal endowments are assumed to be equally distributed, is of course the whole set of external means that affect people's capacity to pursue their conceptions of the good life, irrespective of whether they are natural or produced. External endowments, in other words, include whatever usable external object in the broadest sense individuals receive access to. Such material objects as factories and stamp collections, private houses and public bridges, such immaterial objects as nursery rhymes and computer programmes, the work ethic and nuclear technology constitute external assets on a par with beaches, pumpkins and parrots. The relevant pool coincides with the external assets with which people are endowed.

(pp. 100–1)⁹

It would seem to follow, says Van Parijs, that taxation at the level of 100 per cent on all bequests and gifts is justified. But there are reservations, the most important of which is that the aim of maximising the tax yield is unlikely to be secured by confiscatory measures. And, in any case, Van Parijs cites empirical evidence to suggest that the yield on inheritance and gift taxes is very small (p. 102).

Van Parijs circumvents this apparently depressing conclusion about the size of the pool to be redistributed as basic income by focusing on the 'existence of a type of asset that has been overlooked so far' (p. 113). Correcting the oversight, Van Parijs argues that everyone should have a tradeable entitlement to an equal share of the value of *job assets*, and that a tax should therefore be levied on the wages of those in paid employment. More specifically, the tax system should recoup job-holder's *employment rents*, or 'the difference between the income (and other advantages) the employed derive from their job, and the (lower) income they would need if the [labour] market were to clear' (p. 108).

As has been emphasised, this argument has so far rested on the idea that talents (skills) are equal. But, of course, they are not. Nor are talents equivalent to skills, since skills can be acquired and, presumably, talents are in-built. Van Parijs's next move is to assimilate jobs to external assets, rather than to internal endowments, so they are not covered by the undominated diversity provisions that apply to internal endowments. The problem of acquired skills is handled not by differential taxation (differentiating, that is, between *natural* talent and *acquired* skill) but by the

stability of the tax regime (so that those who set out to acquire a skill, leading to a higher paid job, know in advance where they stand). The upshot is a stable (through time) system of income taxation for job-holders.¹⁰

1.8 Exploitation

Van Parijs's penultimate chapter, before we return to the assessment of the relative virtues and vices of socialism and capitalism, deals with exploitation. This issue is clearly highly germane, for two reasons. First, one of the main criticisms of capitalism has been – and remains – that it exploits people (whereas socialism does not). *If* this is so, it will obviously have to be weighed in the final reckoning of the claims of those socio-economic regimes. Secondly, the provision of a basic income subject to the satisfaction of the condition of undominated diversity may raise the charge of exploitation in a society characterised by real freedom for all – that the idle exploit the industrious by receiving an income generated (*inter alia*) by the activity of those who choose to work.

To consider these points, Van Parijs confronts the various theories of exploitation that have been offered. Having accepted a rough account of 'exploitation' as taking unfair advantage of someone else's work, Van Parijs embarks on an exploration of the notions of 'unfair', 'work', 'someone' and 'advantage' in that characterisation. Van Parijs considers five proposals to limit the range of what counts as exploitation: that workers are entitled to the full fruits of their labour (otherwise they are exploited); that the creator of a product should be entitled to keep it (otherwise s/he is exploited); that exploitation consists in the appropriation of surplus value; that exploitation is a violation of the principle 'to each according to his/her efforts'; and the game theoretic approach of John Roemer, which tries to determine whether exploitation exists by reference to the distribution of assets. He finds fault with all these formulations, but settles on a conception of exploitation akin to Roemer's in that it suggest that (suitably modified) asset-based inequality arguments about exploitation will assess capitalism and socialism in a similar way to the test of real freedom for all.

1.9 A world of basic income?

And so, in his final chapter, Van Parijs moves to make that assessment. I have already quoted his conclusion, and I hope now to have explained how he reaches it. But we need to explore a little further the arguments of that final chapter, because they touch upon two more important

issues: the geographical scope of the real libertarian principle of justice, and problems which arise from what is now known as *globalisation*.

A world market, even for socialist regimes, puts competitive pressure on all those involved in the (world) division of labour. There is thus a problem (discussed in a section called 'Steering Clear of Penguin Island') arising from these competitive pressures: it might be that by the standards of real-freedom-for-all a society was just, but that it contained great inequalities and very little by way of state welfare provision. This might arise because, under all the circumstances, including international competitive pressure, it was providing the maximum sustainable basic income (subject to the usual constraints). Some of the effects of this competitiveness, Van Parijs hopes, might be mitigated by the development of 'solidaristic patriotism' – a reluctance to take opportunistic advantage of one's right to migrate based upon pride in the collective project of sustaining a just society. Some others might be mitigated by 'democratic scale-lifting' – moving democratic decision-making to a level at which it was able to control the rules of trade, etc., rather than being hamstrung by the pressures of competition. Ideally, then, a democratic world government; and, ideally too, a world society of real freedom for all. Van Parijs is clear that the imperatives of *leximin* real freedom are not extinguished at national borders. Given the remoteness of either democratic world government or world *leximin* real freedom, however, he also sees merit in regional, trans-national arrangements.

1.10 The search for social justice

It was claimed at the beginning of this Introduction that Van Parijs has addressed fundamental concerns – for example, the nature of justice and the rival appeals of capitalism and socialism – and contributed to the literature on important debates in contemporary political philosophy – for example, the nature of self-ownership and the nature of exploitation. The aim of this Introduction was to set out the structure of *Real Freedom for All*, and to show how, for this reader, his answers to the fundamental concerns relate to his positions on those debates. As the critical essays in this volume illustrate, his argument invites searching assessment at many points. It is also likely to generate differences in interpretation. Van Parijs, in his Reply, has an opportunity to examine those interpretations and to respond to his critics. As he there makes clear, the debate on the merits of real libertarianism continues – and so does political activity directed at securing its introduction. There can be no doubt that one of the central projects of political philosophy (conceived as a collective

endeavour) in the last generation – determining what, exactly, is required by a commitment to social justice – is both exemplified and carried forward by his contribution. The reader is invited to join in that endeavour by engaging with the debates that follow.

Notes

1. See *Real Freedom for All: What (if Anything) Can Justify Capitalism?* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995). Unless specified otherwise, all unmarked page numbers refer to this book. More recently, in 2001, Van Parijs received Belgium's most prestigious academic award, the Franqui Prize.
2. The excluded sentence reads: 'In the process of reaching this conclusion, the focus of discussion has moved away from the traditional question with which this book started – the choice between capitalism and socialism – towards other dimensions along which socio-economic regimes may vary.'
3. 'Libertarians should rather be called rights-fetishists, and their alleged freedom-based case for capitalism, pure or otherwise, is worth no more than the freedom-based case for socialism rejected in the previous section' (p. 15).
4. Self-ownership is a notoriously slippery notion. Van Parijs thinks that self-ownership does not preclude income taxation (pp. 115–17, p. 254 n. 17), and he seems willing to limit the right to strike (pp. 213–14). Van Parijs discusses 'self-ownership' in sections 1.1 and 1.8 in particular, and acknowledges (p. 9) that 'Self-ownership is not a perennial idea. It is a modern idea, and one that remains controversial.'
5. Van Parijs's discussion begins on p. 25. The explication of the notion of a maximally free society is complex. He writes: 'I take it for granted that this leximin (or "lexicographic maximin") formulation is better than either a purely aggregative formula (for example, in terms of the opportunities of society's average member) or a more egalitarian formula (for example, in terms of maximum equal opportunities) to express the idea that the members of a (maximally) free society are *all as free as possible*.'
6. The inspiration for the idea of leximin freedom is, of course, John Rawls's difference principle. Like the principle of leximin opportunity, the difference principle is subordinate to prior principles, which, in the Rawlsian case, require an equal distribution of basic civil liberties, and a fair opportunity to acquire jobs, or other positions of authority and influence. The difference principle itself requires that the basic structure be arranged so that inequalities maximally advantage the least advantaged representative individual.
7. Examples of such previous work are: Robert Van der Veen and Phillippe Van Parijs, 'A Capitalist Road to Communism', *Theory and Society* 15/5 (1986), pp. 635–56, reprinted in P. Van Parijs, *Marxism Recycled* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), ch. 8; Van Parijs, 'Why Surfers Should Be Fed: the Liberal Case for Basic Income', *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 20 (1991), pp. 101–31; and Van Parijs, 'Basic Income Capitalism', *Ethics* 102 (1992), pp. 465–84.
8. For classic discussion, see Ronald Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), ch. 1, esp. section viii. For further discussion,

- see also Mathew Clayton and Andrew Williams, 'Egalitarian Justice and Interpersonal Comparison', *European Journal of Political Research* 35 (1999), pp. 445–64, esp. pp. 448–50.
9. See also Bert Hamminga, 'Demoralizing the Labour Market: Could Jobs Be like Cars and Concerts?' *Journal of Political Philosophy* 3 (1995), pp. 23–35.
 10. The thought then occurs that if individuals are taken to possess a right of access to external assets like jobs, it is not clear whether there might not be potentially embarrassing analogies with access to personal relationships – an issue which Van Parijs appears to take seriously, on the ground that rationing implies the presence of rent, albeit in this case a rent not likely to be worth trying to obtain. (This is because a 'scarcity rent' has to be 'sufficiently sizable and seizable to be worth chasing – a condition unlikely to be met in the case of partnerships' (p. 130).)

Index

- Ackerman, Bruce, 9, 52n. 18, 151–2, 159n. 35, 160n. 41
- Alstott, Anne, 151–2, 159n. 35, 160n. 41
- Anderson, Elizabeth, 205, 215n. 11, n. 16
- Arneson, Richard, 29, 48n. 1, 49n. 2, 50n. 7, 52n. 20, n. 22, 64, 65, 79n. 11, 134n. 13, 198n. 4, n. 12, 199n. 26, 203, 204, 215n. 9
- Arnsperger, Christian, 29, 49n. 2
- Arrow, Kenneth, 79n. 8
- Atkinson, Anthony, 149, 158n. 28
- Barber, Benjamin, 198n. 3, 199n. 18
- Barry, Brian, 15, 25n. 2, 53–79, 80–94, 133n. 5, 158n. 19, 201, 203, 215n. 5, n. 6
- basic income, 1, 5–6, 65–72, 80–94, 96, 111–15, 136–60, 209
- delivery of, 7, 9
 - and employment, 146, 148
 - global, 161–3, 165, 166, 167, 209–11
 - history as idea, 15–26
 - and household labour, 147, 148–9
 - and job quality, 147, 149
 - level of, 3, 6, 15, 16–17, 20–1, 23–4 114–15, 124, 134n. 12, 211
 - pragmatic arguments for, 16, 70, 78n. 1, 82, 90, 91–3, 158
 - principled arguments for, 16, 78n. 1, 80, 91–3, 113–14, 158n. 19
 - required by real freedom, 5–6, 15, 30, 53, 65, 68–71, 80, 84, 95, 111, 136, 203
 - resources for, 3, 9, 10, 15, 16–17, 33, 68, 114–15, 132, 143–4, 166, 206
 - unconditionality of, 1, 5–6, 30, 66, 68, 80–1, 92, 116–17, 121, 136, 143–4, 149–50, 151, 207–8
 - universality of, 3, 9, 116–17, 136, 137, 151
 - variants of, 137, 149–54, 155
 - see also* exploitation
- Bernstein, Eduard, 138, 156n. 4
- Bork, Robert, 198n. 2
- Bowles, Samuel, 141, 156n. 9
- British Labour Party, 22
- Brody, Baruch, 51n. 16
- Brown, Peter, 51n. 16
- brute luck, 33, 34, 36–40, 41, 48, 51n. 2
- 13, 52n. 19, 108–9, 128–30, 142, 145, 147–8, 154, 155, 206
- capitalism, 2, 3, 4, 53, 95
- Carter, Ian, 78n. 5
- Champsaur, Paul, 133n. 9
- Charlier, Joseph, 201
- contrasted with Van Parijs, 16–17, 24–5
 - and exploitation objection, 16, 20, 24
 - and guaranteed minimum, 15, 17, 18–21
 - and level of basic income, 16–17, 20–1
 - and scope of basic income, 17, 21
- Chester, Ronald, 51n. 15
- Christiano, Thomas, 172–200, 212–14, 216n. 24, n. 25, n. 26
- Christman, John, 50n. 7
- Clayton, Matthew, 13n. 8
- Cohen, G. A., 29, 49n. 2, 51n. 12, n. 13, 52n. 20, n. 22, 64, 65, 79n. 10, n. 11, 199n. 26, 200n. 31, 203
- see also* equality
- Cohen, Joshua, 198n. 3, 200n. 28
- Cole, G. D. H., 22
- communitarianism, 164
- Condorcet, 174, 201, 214
- consequentialism, 32
- and democracy, 177, 187, 197, 198n. 5, 213

- constitutional engineering, *see*
 democracy, instrumental
 conceptions of
 contractualism, 32
 culture, national culture, 163
 Cunliffe, John, 15–28, 201, 214n. 3
- Dalton, Hugh, 22
 Dasgupta, Partha, 78n. 4
 Democracy
 and equal consideration of interest,
 185, 188–97, 213, 214
 and fairness, 188
 instrumental conceptions of, 172,
 173–87, 198n. 5, 212, 213
 international, 167, 209, 214
 and justice, 174–97, 212–14
 and political philosophers, 181–6,
 214
 procedural conceptions of, 172,
 173, 175–6, 212
see also consequentialism;
 democratic scale lifting; rights
 democratic scale lifting, 3, 12, 167,
 170, 209
 Dore, Ronald, 150, 159n. 31
 Douglas, Paul, 22
 Dworkin, Ronald, 9, 13n. 8, 29, 40,
 49n. 2, 50n. 8, n. 11, 52n. 17, 61,
 64, 65, 79n. 9, 87, 108, 109n. 3,
 114, 118–20, 128–30, 133n. 8,
 134n. 15, 200n. 31
see also equality
- economic freeriding, *see* freeriding
 economic parasitism, 140–1, 147, 154,
 155, 207
 egalitarianism, 1, 5, 30, 46, 48, 59, 95,
 98, 111–35, 194, 195, 206
 currency of, 59, 61, 65, 72, 81, 89
 liberal, 30, 36, 50n. 6
 and reciprocity, 138, 141–2, 145
see also equality
 Elster, Jon, 134n. 20, 199n. 20
 employment assets, *see* job assets
 employment rents, 10, 115, 117–18,
 199, 122–3, 207, 208
 envy test, 8, 40, 45, 52n. 24, 105–8,
 111–35, 204, 205
- equality, 1, 5, 30, 98, 107, 142, 202,
 203
 of capacity, 194
 of comprehensive endowments, 9,
 41, 45, 102, 105, 124–5, 130–1,
 194, 202, 203
 of external resources, 4, 8, 9, 10, 65,
 104, 112, 114–15, 117, 121–2,
 131, 143–4, 205–7
 of internal resources, 5, 8, 9, 10,
 123–32, 143, 157n. 15
 of opportunity for advantage
 (Cohen), 79n. 11, 194, 199n. 26
 of opportunity for welfare, 41–5, 46,
 64, 65, 118–20, 128–30
 of political power, 178–87, 195–7,
 199n. 16, 212, 213
 of resources (Dworkin), 61, 63, 64,
 65, 118–20, 128–30
 and self-ownership, 30, 34, 35, 36,
 37, 38, 40, 41
 of welfare, 62, 63, 64, 65, 118, 194,
 199n. 26
- equal respect, 71, 181, 184–5, 214
 equal treatment, 61–2
 Ereygers, Guido, 15–28, 201, 214n. 3
 exploitation
 capitalist, 11
 as objection to basic income, 11, 15,
 16, 20, 23, 24, 71, 75–6, 92,
 111, 136–7, 143–55
- fairness, 61–2, 65, 71, 77, 101–8, 112,
 206, 208–9
see also reciprocity
 Fleurbay, Marc, 29, 49n. 2, 135n. 21
 formal freedom, 3, 6, 79n. 13, 97,
 134n. 12
 free society, 2, 3, 4, 70, 79n. 13
 freeriding, 111, 136, 139–40, 141, 147,
 154, 155, 202, 207
 Fressola, Anthony, 50n. 7
 Fried, Barbara, 51n. 14
- Gauss, Gerald, 50n. 7
 Gauthier, David, 51n. 13
 George, Henry, 35, 50n. 9
 Gibbard, Alan, 156n. 12
 Gintis, Herbert, 141, 156n. 9

- globalisation, 12, 166, 168, 170, 204
- good life
 for individuals, 82, 71, 107–8, 114, 196, 204, 205, 207, 214
 and justice, 97–9, 104, 117
see also neutrality
- Goetz, Andre, 150, 159n. 32
- Grunebaum, James, 50n. 7
- Hamminga, Bert, 14n. 9
- Haslet, D. W., 51n. 15
- Haveman, Robert, 160n. 41
- Hayek, Von, 4
- Hobbes, Thomas, 32
- incentives, 6, 77–8, 91
- Ingram, Attracta, 50n. 7
- Jackman, Richard, 158n. 26
- job assets, 3, 8, 10, 16–17, 104, 115, 116, 118, 120–3, 133n. 7, 143, 208
- justice, 33, 40, 61, 63, 70–1, 77, 177, 182–3, 186–7
 basic income as condition of, 6, 9, 70, 72, 136
 intergenerational, 6, 177, 178, 179, 181, 182, 186, 187, 214
 international, 162–3, 164–5, 167, 170, 170n. 5, 208, 209, 210, 212
 real libertarian conception of, 2, 4–5, 16, 111–12, 123, 203
 and reciprocity, 137, 141, 142, 143–5
see also democracy; equality; good life; real freedom
- Kant, Immanuel, 32
- Kaus, Mickey, 159n. 29
- Kuttner, Robert, 160n. 41
- Kymlicka, Will, 29, 49n. 2, 71, 79n. 14
- labour markets, 10, 84, 91, 104, 115
- Lans Bovenberg, A., 158n. 27
- Laroque, Guy, 133n. 9
- Layard, Richard, 158n. 27
- Le Grand, Julian, 55, 79n. 6, n. 12
- leisure, 32, 33, 59, 66–71, 75, 77, 80–94, 102, 103–4, 113, 116, 121–2, 126–7
- leximin
 and decreasing marginal benefit, 45–8
 in local and global contexts, 161, 162, 164–5, 166, 168, 170, 210, 211
 opportunity (principle of), 5, 7, 8, 40, 45–8, 78n. 2, 79n. 13, 80–94, 95, 99, 100, 101–9, 111–12, 123, 124, 128, 133n. 5, 171n. 13, 177
- libertarianism, 36, 51n. 12, 97
- Locke, John, 32
- Luxemburg, Rosa, 155n. 3
- McCormick, James, 159n. 29
- Machiavelli, Niccolo, 183, 199n. 19
- Mack, Eric, 50n. 7
- McKerlie, Dennis, 52n. 25, 199n. 23
- Meade, James, 158n. 21, n. 22
- Miller, David, 171n. 6, n. 7
- Milner, Dennis, and Mabel Milner
 contrasted with Van Parijs, 16–17, 24–5
 and exploitation objection, 16, 23, 24
 and level of basic income, 16–17, 23–4
 and scope of basic income, 17, 24
 and state bonus scheme, 15, 16, 22–4
- Munzer, Stephen, 50n. 7
- Musgrave, Richard, 79n. 15
- Narveson, Jan, 51n. 26
- neutrality, 5, 6, 71, 97–101, 103, 109, 110n. 5, 207
see also good life
- Nickell, Steve, 158n. 26
- Nozick, Robert, 51n. 12, n. 14, n. 15, 165, 171n. 14
- Okin, Susan, 158n. 23
- Okun, Arthur, 156n. 11
- opportunity costs, 8, 59
- option luck, 36, 39, 206

- Parfit, Derek, 50n. 4, 52n. 9
 Paine, Thomas, 35, 50n. 9
 Parato criterion, 55–7
 Pickard, Bertram, 22–4
 preferences *see* tastes
- Rakowski, Eric, 29, 49n. 2, 52n. 21,
 134n. 17, n. 18, 203
- Rathbone, Eleanor, 22
- Rawls, John, 13n. 6, 40, 52n. 17, 53,
 95, 97–8, 109n. 2, n. 3, 110n. 4,
 113–14, 156n. 12, 171n. 7, 199n.
 24, 200n. 28, 203, 206
- real freedom, 3, 53–5, 65, 67, 72, 80,
 82, 84, 99, 202
 geographical scope of, 12, 15, 17,
 96, 161–71
 and income, 59–61, 65, 68–71, 75,
 80, 82, 83, 85–8, 90, 91
 and justice, 6, 53, 70–1, 72, 77, 81,
 82, 89, 91, 96–7, 99, 214
 and maximin, 4, 13n. 5, 30, 53, 57,
 68, 70, 71, 73, 78n. 2, 79n. 13,
 202, 203, 206
 measurement of, 7–8, 55–8, 59,
 60–5, 81, 83, 85–8, 110n. 5
 and opportunity, 4, 6, 8, 30, 53, 54,
 67, 71, 76, 91–2, 95, 101, 123,
 133n. 4, 203, 206–7
 and special needs, 72–5, 76
 and welfare, 54, 57, 59–60, 63–5,
 66, 67, 71, 72
see also basic income; leximin
- real libertarianism, 2, 111, 128, 164,
 166
see also justice; real freedom
- reciprocity, 16, 111, 136–60, 207, 208,
 209
see also egalitarianism; fairness;
 justice
- Reeve, Andrew, 1–14
- reflective equilibrium, 177, 202
- Rigano, Eugenio, 51n. 15
- rights, 32, 61–2, 121–3, 139, 144, 165,
 202–3
 and democracy, 175, 196
 fetishism of, 4
 to income, 33–4, 35, 37, 140
 to religious belief, 61–2
- Ripstein, Arthur, 50n. 11
- Roemer, John, 11, 29, 30, 49n. 2, 52n.
 19
- Roland, Gérard, 215n. 23
- Rothstein, Bo, 142, 156n. 10
 rule of law, 77
- Sartorius, Rolph, 51n. 16
 self-ownership, 1, 4, 6, 13n. 4,
 29–52, 79n. 13, 95, 111, 124,
 126, 127–8, 134n. 16, 177, 202,
 203, 216n. 25
 conceptions of, 31–5
see also equality
- Sen, Amartya, 29, 49n. 2, 134n. 20,
 203
- Simon, Herbert, 215n. 14
- Singer, Peter, 134n. 11
 slavery of the talented, 32–3,
 125–8
- social ownership, 36–7, 50n. 8
 of natural resources, 34–5, 37
- socialism, 2, 4, 3, 53, 95, 138
- solidaristic patriotism, 3, 12, 150,
 163–71, 209–12
- solidarity, 137–42, 143, 155, 207, 208,
 209
- sovereignty, international sovereignty,
 166–7
- Snare, Frank, 50n. 7
- Spencer, Herbert, 35, 50n. 9
- Steiner, Hillel, 29, 49n. 2, 51n. 16,
 161–71, 209–11, 215n. 20
- sustainability, 6
- Swedish economic model, 82, 92
- talents, 32, 66, 84, 96, 98, 113, 140,
 203, 204, 207
 inequality of, 8, 10, 75–6, 84, 93n.
 4, 102–5, 108–9
- tastes, 116, 120–1, 130–2, 205
 expensive tastes, 8, 9, 42, 43, 62, 63,
 65, 66–7, 75, 76, 101, 106–7,
 117–20, 129–30
 malleability of, 42–3, 67
 responsibility for, 29, 33, 42,
 63–5, 66–8, 75–7, 100–1, 109,
 131
 shaped by regime, 89, 106, 132

- taxation, 6, 11, 32, 35–40, 68,
75–6, 83, 85–8, 94n. 5, 114,
117, 124, 127–8, 151–2, 166,
178
gifts, 39–40, 48
income, 32, 33, 77–8, 115, 206
inheritance, 10
Temkin, Larry, 52n. 25, 199n. 22
Thompson, Judith, 50n. 7
- undominated diversity, 3, 9, 6, 30, 41,
43–5, 46, 48, 102–5, 123–32,
134n. 12, n. 13, 202, 203, 204,
205, 207
unemployment, 84, 85, 86, 87, 91, 92,
117–20, 121–3, 133n. 7, 143, 146,
148, 208
utilitarianism, 42, 56, 164, 165
- Vadevelde, Toon, 215, n. 23
Vallentyne, Peter, 29–52, 202, 206,
215n. 6
van der Ploeg, Rick, 158n. 27
van der Veen, Robert, 13n. 7, 78n. 1,
80–94, 147, 158n. 24, 201,
215n. 5
van Donselaar, Gijs, 155n. 1,
156n. 7, 157n. 17, 207, 208,
215n. 18
- Van Parijs, Philippe, *Real Freedom for
All* 1–2, 12, 13n. 1, 15, 29, 53,
78, 80, 95, 111, 120, 124, 132,
136, 143, 145, 155, 202, 203,
206, 209, 212
Van Trier, Walter, 15–28, 201,
214n. 3
Varian, Hal, 29, 49n. 2, 133n. 9,
134n. 10
- Waldron, Jeremy, 50n. 7, 198n. 6,
199n. 21
Walzer, Michael, 191, 199n. 25
weak mutual advantage *see* reciprocity
Weirich, Paul, 52n. 26
Weitzman, Martin, 158n. 21
welfare, 42, 43–4, 54, 56, 57, 59–60,
62, 64, 65, 66, 67, 71, 72, 105,
107, 118, 188
see also equality; real freedom
welfare state, 69, 80–94, 141, 142,
209
White, Stuart, 25n. 3, 49n. 2, 133n. 3,
136–60, 205, 215n. 10, n. 16, n. 19
Williams, Andrew, 13n. 8, 25n. 1, 28n.
44, 49n. 1, 111–35, 151, 204, 205,
214, 215n. 8
- Young, Iris, 198n. 3

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