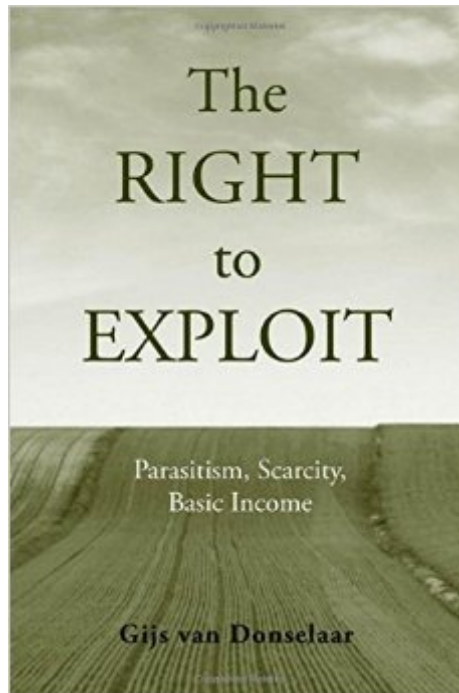


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The Right To Exploit: Parasitism, Scarcity, And Basic Income



Synopsis

In 1895 an English farmer diverted the course of a stream that was flowing through his land, thereby cutting off the supply to the water reservoir of the neighboring community. The courts established that it had been his purpose to "injure the plaintiffs by carrying off the water and to compel them to buy him off." Regardless of what the law says, most people will feel that the farmer's intentions were morally unjust; he was trying to abuse his property rights in order to take advantage of others. Yet, as Gijs van Donselaar explains, the major traditions in the theory of economic justice, both from the libertarian right and from the egalitarian left, have failed to appreciate the moral objection to exploitative behavior that this case displays. Those traditions entertain radically opposed views on how private property should be distributed, but they do not consider the legitimacy of constraints on the exercise of property rights--however they are distributed. The second part of the book demonstrates how this failure clears the way for a recent egalitarian argument, gaining in popularity, for a so-called unconditional basic income. If all have an initial right to an equal share of the resources of the world, then it soon seems to follow that all have a right to an equal share of the value of the resources of the world, which could be cashed in as a labor-free income. That inference is only valid if moral behavior similar to that of the farmer is tolerated. Van Donselaar argues that, ultimately, a confusion about the nature and value of freedom of choice is responsible for the odd conception of private rights in resources that would justify exploitation.

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Customer Reviews

Doing my thesis on this subject, its a brilliant and thought provoking book - a must-read for those

interested in theories of justice in appropriation and property rights, parasitism and free market theory. Whether they be critically inclined or free market proponents, it will challenge your preconceived ideas regarding the right to transact freely.

Brilliant analysis, written in an eloquent style. A must read for anyone who is interested in economic and philosophical matters. It will also prove to be a very useful book for my own project. Thanks for writing it. Christiaan Vos

This book is a must-have-read for every thinker interested in issues of market justice, (non)exploitation, self-ownership, allocation of natural resources and basic income. Though I deliberately disagree with the challenging central thesis of this book, it is a thesis one cannot afford to have no opinion on.

first paragraph and i am hooked on this book -- just what i was looking for to provide background and explain development of our current definition of property rights particularly considering the increasing level of inequity across almost all economies. also liked the explanation and discussion of basic income.

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