

Basic Income: Comprehensive paternalism pursuing autonomy.

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Abstract

Many authors (Paine 1797, Milner 1920, Rhys-Williams 1943, van Parijs 1997, Standing 2002, Tomlinson 2003, Offe 2008) claim a universal Basic Income would promote autonomy. They argue that the poorest and most vulnerable residents of a country would gain the most from the sense of financial security and independence which a universal Basic Income would provide. Philippe van Parijs (1997) describes a universal Basic Income as ensuring *Real Freedom for All* by which he means a form of freedom which embodies security, self-ownership and opportunity (p. 22). Guy Standing (2002) sees such a Basic Income as a way of guaranteeing against the insidious undermining of economic and social protection which the emerging paternalism of late 20th and early 21st centuries foists on the least privileged citizens of Western English speaking countries. As he says, the reciprocity principle lies at “the heart of Third Wayism, and the New Paternalism which guided it (p. 168)”.

This paper will examine some of the contradictions surrounding the inherent paternalism of providing an unearned income to every permanent resident as a way of promoting autonomy. It will also examine how these contradictions impede the introduction of a Basic Income in Western English-speaking countries. It will look at the moral objections raised by supporters of participation income and their reciprocity-promoting colleagues to the introduction of a universal Basic Income. It will be argued that social solidarity or republican conceptions of society are a more fertile ground in which to plant the seeds of a Basic Income.

Paternalism and Basic Income

Ruben Lo Vuolo and Daniel Raventos (2009) assert that Basic Income is a guaranteed regular income paid (ideally above the poverty line) by the state, to each and every permanent resident irrespective of their income or assets, labor market attachment or cohabitation arrangements. It is paid without appending any reciprocal obligation. Raventos provides a more detailed discussion of what constitutes a Basic Income at Chapter 1 of his 2007 book *Basic Income: The Material Conditions of Freedom*.

If a government provides a Basic Income to every permanent resident, rich and poor, worker and non-worker, young and old, married and unmarried, urban and rural resident without *requiring* them to contribute in anyway, then this act, by its very nature, is paternalistic. Since the days of the Poor Laws, governments have acted paternalistically towards some residents who sought assistance, namely the deserving poor. A universal Basic Income extends the paternalistic act to all permanent residents and, in providing such an income guarantee, the government ensures that everyone has sufficient income to sustain him or herself.

Is there any difference in the paternalism of such universal payments that makes them less objectionable than the paternalism explicit and implicit in targeted categorical welfare payments or participation income schemes? I think the answer is an undeniable “Yes!” though it is true that under a Basic Income every permanent resident is, from birth to death, guaranteed an income entitlement to which they have not *directly* contributed. In that sense,

the provision of such income support is clearly a benevolently paternalistic act of the government towards each and every permanent resident.

What makes the paternalism of a Basic Income less objectionable is the fact that the state does not require any reciprocal obligation. Under a Basic Income, as opposed to categorical welfare or participation income, the paternalism does not erode autonomy (Offe 2008). Each citizen is conceived of as receiving her or his entitlement from the common wealth (Paine 1797). Equally each permanent resident is considered to be contributing to the common wealth. So the state does not impose obligations on citizens because they are not considered to have obligations to meet. Rather, the state is meeting its obligation to those who are born (or who the state has accepted have a right to live permanently) within its territory.

The paternalism implicit and explicit in the relationship between the state and its citizens under a universal Basic Income is thus of a very different order from that which exists under a targeted categorical welfare system or a participation income scheme. In these latter schemes the reciprocal obligations which fall upon recipients are defined directly by the state and must be met or the benefit is withheld.

This paper will return to look in detail at the relative paternalistic impositions of targeted categorical welfare systems / participation income programs and universal Basic Income, but will first compare the relative paternalism of Negative Income Tax and Basic Income.

Negative Income Tax / Tax Credit: the libertarian solution

Milton Friedman (1962) proposed a Negative Income Tax as a way to abolish most welfare state programs. Friedman (1962, pp.191-194, 1968) saw in the Negative Income Tax an opportunity *to pay the poor and only the poor* and to dismantle much of the welfare infrastructure which sustained service delivery. He saw it as a way to rationalise the tax and social security systems and also justify the abolition of farm subsidies and transfers to the middle class.

Negative Income Tax and its tax credit variation have the potential to limit individuals' involvement with their government. Only those individuals who wish to claim the Negative Income Tax or the tax credit component have to involve themselves with the government's tax / welfare redistributive systems. So a country with a Negative Income Tax could have fewer citizens receiving the income guarantee than an equivalent country with a Basic Income. In this sense, a Negative Income Tax is a less comprehensive paternalistic form of income support than is a Basic Income. As such, the Negative Income Tax might appeal to conservative libertarians.

Whilst it is true, however, that a Negative Income Tax allows libertarians to escape the clutches of the government's *welfare redistributive* system, it is hardly likely that they will escape involvement with the taxation system. If they earn enough not to need the income support offered by the government, they are likely to be earning sufficient to require them to pay income tax to the government. Because of their belief in the virtues of small government, such libertarians are likely to want to minimise their tax by claiming all the deductions they can. In many countries the rich get far greater tax concessions on "allowable" expenses and superannuation contributions than the poor get from the social security system. That is, the

tax redistributive system is often far more generous to the well off than the welfare redistributive system is to the poor.

In another sense, a Negative Income Tax system and the tax credit variation of it are more like targeted welfare systems than is a Basic Income. People applying for a tax credit or a Negative Income Tax must make a more detailed application and have a greater understanding of their earnings, potential earnings, the tax system and economics generally. Many who would be eligible for payment were they to apply, fail to do so. The least bureaucratically sophisticated, who are generally the poorest citizens, make up the majority of those who fail to apply. Jonathon Boston and Susan St. John (1998) and Guy Standing (2002 pp. 96-105, 2008) have established that this is also the case with categorical welfare systems. The more complex the system and the greater the complexity of the application process, the less likely it is that all who are poor and eligible will receive their entitlements.

So, while a Negative Income Tax may well ensure that a lower percentage of permanent residents are reliant upon the paternalistic largesse of the government than would be the case under a universal Basic Income, this is an ethereal victory for conservative libertarians. It is a tenuous success because many, if not most, of those who are excluded will be eligible residents who are bureaucratically unsophisticated and impoverished. Because of this, Negative Income Tax schemes do not meet Friedman's prime claim that Negative Income Tax is capable of providing an income stream to "the poor and only the poor".

Even when governments do implement a tax credit system, what they introduce is not a universal tax credit. The tax credit is frequently targeted to specific categories of residents and may have elements of conditionality. For instance in Australia there are tax credits but they are only available to those who have children and in Britain and the USA the tax credit is only available to those who are employed for a set minimum number of hours each week.

Paternalism and participation income

In 2001, Robert Goodin wrote:

what clearly underlies welfare to work reforms around the world...is a view that work is intrinsically good, and welfare a second best. ...

Sweaty brows are an old socialist icon, of course. That goes far towards explaining why parties of the left as well as the right have converged upon 'active labour market policies' as the solution to their welfare expenditure blow-outs. ...

If we seriously believed that work is good for you and that it is the state's legitimate role to force you to do it, then we would have no grounds for confining our paternalism to the poor. Paternalistically speaking, it would be equally important to make the rich work too (pp. 197-198).

Guy Standing (2002) traces the rise of the labourist tradition in the 20th century pointing out that "during the course of the century the balance of the rhetoric shifted from exulting over the rights of labour through demanding the right to labour and then ending up emphasizing the duty to labour (p. 9)".

Goodin (2001) acknowledges that some advocates of participation income like Tony Atkinson (1996) define the form the expected contribution might take to include a very wide range of activities: from compelled labour, to study, to undertaking child care or community

service. The wider the choice of activities available to those coerced into undertaking participation income activities the less oppressive are the requirements. As was seen in Australia during the last three decades, however, the reciprocal requirements demanded of those with little option but to rely on an unemployment or disability payment gradually became more oppressive until many, particularly the young, were forced to “work for the dole” or carry out other soul-destroying tasks.

A 2003 report entitled *Much Obligated*, commissioned by the Brotherhood of St Laurence and the St Vincent de Paul Society, asserted that people who became long-term unemployed have so much of their time taken up just meeting the obligations imposed on them by the government that they don't have time to find work: the report concludes the “mutual obligation” regime “is failing the most disadvantaged job seekers. Overall the system operates...not as ‘welfare to work’ but ‘welfare as work’” (Ziguras, Dufty and Considine 2003, p.43).

In 2007 I wrote:

There is very little mutuality in the present Australian system of “mutual obligations”. The Government provides an income which, for most, is less than the poverty line but demands in return that recipients meet a series of enforced “obligations”. The Federal Government in recent years imposed its “work for the dole” policy, demanding young unemployed people who have literacy or numeracy difficulties attend classes on threat of having their benefits reduced, and increasing threefold the number of suspensions of payments inflicted on Social Security recipients in the three years to 2002. Centrelink imposed 386,946 breaches during the 2000–2001 financial year (ACOSS 2001, 2002, p. 2). Considerable numbers of those who have had their payments suspended have experienced homelessness and other life crises (p. 35).

Bettina Cass (1986, 1988) headed an inquiry into the Australian income support system for the Labor government of the day. She recommended the introduction of a form of participation income support which she called an “active” employment policy. Like Atkinson (1996), she included a wide range of “activities” from child care through study to work. Labor lost office in 1996 and the incoming conservative government determined to end what it saw as excessive reliance on social security.

In 1999, the Minister for Family and Community Services, Jocelyn Newman, decided to set up a full scale review of income support. Her riding instructions to the review were laid out in a monograph entitled *The Challenge of Welfare Dependency in the 21st Century*. A year later, the review committee dutifully reported to the government that there was a need to insist that social security recipients met their obligations to work, study or engage in other “activation” activities (McClure 2000).

Standing (2002, p. 104) puts such “activation” policies into perspective when he writes that: The notion of active labour market policy is equally disingenuous. The word “active” seems virile and strong, whereas its opposite, “passive”, suggests laziness, a lack of initiative. Who could be in favour of being passive if one could be active? In fact, active policy is little more than having the state telling people what they must do in order to receive some modest benefit, directing them to training or job schemes. By contrast, the much-derided passive policy entails giving funds to individuals or

families with minimal or no conditions, leaving them to make choices about how to conduct their lives and allocate their resources.

Claus Offe (2008 p. 10) says that the enthusiasm for the euphemism of “activation” results in categorisations, caring for, managing, controlling, treatment, supervision and frequent stigmatization of recipients which in turn “reduces them to the passive status of sheltered, paternalistically regulated objects” who are denied meaningful choice in their lives.

Supporters of participation income foist “activation” activities on applicants for income support, presumably because they believe that unless there is some form of compulsion beneficiaries will fail to make any contribution to their self-development or to society or to both. I claim the reason welfare administrators and supporters of participation income are reluctant to trust others (to do the right thing) is because they do not trust themselves to do the ethical thing (2003, Ch. 8). Henning Melber (2009), echoing Standing (2002), defuses the participation income argument by explaining what a Basic Income actually tries to achieve. He says:

It seeks to restore human dignity and (self-)respect through a modest but nonetheless enabling financial transfer which allows recipients to become active and to make spending options they otherwise would not have. In that sense, it also fosters ownership over matters and creates an identity of belonging and citizenship as opposed to isolated destitution. ... (It) allows the marginalized to make use of opportunities to actively participate in the society.

In 2001 Goodin explained some of the mechanisms behind the contractions in generosity of welfare policies by pointing to:

- moral panic even though “the panic is groundless”,
- mean minded governments “engineering more hoops for people to jump through” and “clearing the rolls by tripping up some”, and
- “bureaucratic disentanglement” adding “the more cumbersome the process, the more people will fail to satisfy some requirement (pp. 198-199)”.

It is obvious that there is a great similarity between participation income and a range of targeted categorical welfare programs. Many of the benefits and problems present in participation income share features with categorical means-tested benefits as well as a history extending back to the days of the Poor Laws and to earlier parish-run charities.

Embedded in all non-universal systems of income support are judgments about the needs and social worth of potential recipients. Robert Goodin makes the point that:

The basic problems with presumptions are...they are vulnerable to factual error, and they are vulnerable to social change. ...

We presume, for purposes of social policy, that families will share income equitably, that families will stick together, and that people will respect court orders to support their children. But perhaps we are under no illusions about the empirical unreality of those propositions, in all too many cases. Perhaps we build those presumptions into social policy none the less because we want to try to alter social reality in those respects, and we think that building those presumptions into social policy will somehow help to do so (1992, pp. 20-206).

When the first Australian Commonwealth pensions were introduced in 1910, applicants were required to establish they were of “good moral character” before they could be paid. Such provisions remained in place until 1973. Guy Standing (2002, pp. 173-174) makes the point that: “Although its adherents like to use the word “new”, workfare has a long tradition. It was enshrined in the English *Poor Law* of 1536 dealing with “sturdy vagabonds”, and in the French *Ordonnance de Moulins* of 1556. The most famous precedent was the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act in Great Britain, a targeted system designed to reach only the “deserving” and desperate poor (*italics in original*)”. Joel Handler (2002, footnote No. 217) traces this distinction back to the Statute of Labourers in 1348 with its prohibition against the giving of alms to “sturdy beggars”. Such distinctions have probably been around since the concept of charity emerged.

Basic Income and the republican justification for avoiding poverty

So far in this paper I have discussed the failure of Negative Income Tax or its tax credit variation and targeted categorical welfare programs to abolish poverty because of their complexity which in turn makes it harder for the bureaucratically less sophisticated to lodge a successful application. I have not raised the issue of stigma which is part and parcel of welfare systems and which results in many people refusing to apply for welfare benefits. British workhouses, during the days of the Poor Laws, were the exemplar of such welfare systems. In 1996, Professor Hugh Stretton pointed to continuing similarities between the 19th century Poor Law regime and the Australian Social Security system (see also Tomlinson, Dee & Schooneveldt 2005).

As Raventos (2007, p. 21) notes: poverty is a pervasive phenomenon involving privation, material want, dependence on the arbitrary whims of others, lack of self-esteem and, frequently, social isolation. He notes with approval Robespierre’s many references to the importance of society guaranteeing ‘the material existence of all citizens’. This is what Raventos (2007, Chs. 3-6) terms the republican justification of a Basic Income. He writes: “Basic income is a proposal that seeks to eradicate poverty. However, from the republican standpoint, if this is a goal to be pursued it is precisely because eradicating poverty by guaranteeing the material existence of all citizens is a necessary condition for the exercise of freedom (p. 108)”. This justification of the Republican proposition and of Basic Income squares the circle from van Parijs’ analysis in *Real Freedom for All* via the French Revolution and back to the 21st century.

In 2007, Raventos justifies the payment of a Basic Income without requiring willingness to work or any other contribution from the recipient. He writes that in addition to promoting autonomy it would not interfere with willingness to labour (p. 81). Raventos argues that a Basic Income is necessary to enhance equity because many extremely wealthy individuals in Europe and elsewhere derived huge farm and other subsidies from the state (pp. 191-196). He justifies his belief that a Basic Income would not interfere with work effort because people who had won major lotteries in Europe continued to work (Marx and Peeters 2004) and from the elaborate Negative Income Tax studies carried out in the USA.

As far back as 1920, Dennis Milner argued that a Basic Income should be paid to all permanent residents without the requirement to prove that they were willing to work. Milner asserted that nearly everyone was eager to find employment, that fellow citizens would place pressure on unemployed people to engage in productive labour, and that, in any case, the few

who were capable of working but who refused to would be unlikely to make much of a contribution to the economy. Claus Offe (2008) supports Milner's assertion by pointing out that surveys on "'happiness' seem to suggest that the absence of opportunities to make oneself useful correlates strongly with a strong feeling of unhappiness (p.14)"and that coerced workers in German "activation" programs were not sought after by employers (p. 8).

Writing in the aftermath of the recent world-wide recession, Lo Vuolo and Raventos (2009) argue that if the USA and other countries are prepared to bailout the executives of finance houses who caused the recession, it is no longer reasonable to oppose the introduction of a Basic Income on the grounds that markets should not be regulated or that public monies should not be distributed. They assert that it makes much more sense to distribute money directly to poor people who suffered as a result of the economic down turn than prop-up those who caused the crises.

In the Otjivero-Omitara area of Namibia a Basic Income monthly grant of \$100 (Namibian) is being provided by the Basic Income Grant Coalition to every person under the age of 60 who was living there in July 2007. Within one year of receiving the grant:

- crime had decreased, as had poverty and child malnutrition,
- the rate of those (above the age of 15 years) engaged in income generating activities increased from 44 to 55% of the population,
- school attendance and visits to the health clinic rose dramatically, and
- household debt had dropped significantly while household savings had risen (Haarmann, C., Haarmann, D., Jauch, Shindondola-Mote, Natrass, van Niekerk and Samson (2009, pp. 12-15).

Bishop Kameeta, a strong promoter of the Namibian Basic Income Grant Coalition, reflecting upon the miracle of the loaves and fishes noted that working on the Basic Income trial in Otjivero-Omitara had led to a different understanding of the miracle. He writes:

The miracle lies in the sharing! The breaking of bread together. Jesus shared unconditionally, without saying: you look needy and you don't, you are deserving and you are not, you need to stand in this queue and you must not. No, when you share bread you give to everybody, unconditionally, without so-called targeting - exactly like the BIG. And when you share, people open up, you create an opportunity and you create a community, and people start to give. The miracle is not about the arithmetic of dividing five loaves of bread among 5000 people, but the miracle is that if you break bread together, people start to open up and to share what they have. That is all. People started to contribute, and this is why you had more than you had before (Haarmann et al. 2009, foreword p. vi).

The eminent Australian jurist, Geoffrey Robertson, recalls that in 1938 "a small group of English writers and scholars led by H. G. Wells – J.B. Priestly was one of their number and A.A. Milne motored up from Pooh Corner to help with the draft – produced a universal declaration of human rights, a document that was based not on notions of natural rights but was based on human dignity (2009 p. 5)." This document suggested that people have an entitlement to human rights because they "come into the world through no fault of their own".

Such a justification for basic economic security, as would be provided by a Basic Income, is certainly compatible with the republican rationale for a universal income guarantee and the

United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. This Declaration guarantees everyone “equal access to public service in his country” (Article 21 [2]), a “right to social security...in accordance with the organisation and resources of each State” (Article 22) and for all who have work they have the right to have their earned income “supplemented, if necessary by other means of social protection” (Article 23[3]). The 1938 declaration of human rights is also compatible with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Article 11[1]) which guarantees “the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living...and to the continuous improvement of living conditions”.

Republican social solidarity beats targeted means-tested categorical benefits

Goodin, reflecting upon the morality of welfare officials forcing clients to meet ‘activation agreements’, says “the proposition that the welfare worker is putting to her putative ‘client’ is ‘Agree or starve.’ That is the same, in all essentials, to the proposition the highwayman puts to his victim ‘Agree or die (2001, p. 191).”

Some say that we would have a better understanding of others if we were to walk a mile in their shoes. Some won’t want to do that for fear of developing cerebral blisters. Others reject the idea because they fear the burden of other people’s problems. And then there are others very keen to walk a mile in another’s shoes because they know they’ll be a mile away before the theft of the shoes is discovered. This probably helps explain why enforcing obligations on the poorest in return for a poverty line income is so attractive. It may even explain the antipathy which arises when unemployed people, lone parents and others who are struggling to survive financially get a poverty line income which the rich don’t get.

Once people come to accept the corrosive belief that because they don’t get government assistance to help raise their children or cope with a disability then no-one should; and if they do then it should be doled out like charity from the parish poor box. Such people forget that they get tax cuts and government superannuation subsidies which the poor don’t get nor do they seem to notice that they aren’t poor and they don’t have a disability (Tomlinson 2009).

Such downward envy, created by targeted means-tested welfare programs, places an enormous obstacle in the way of the introduction of a Basic Income.

This is a strange phenomenon because it would seem logical on the face of it to make the envied payments universal so that everyone is provided with social protection. Governments find, however, that it puts less strain on budgets to drum up hatred of the poor than to pay universal social benefits. Such downward envy increases the stigma associated with receiving welfare and this in turn causes some not to test their eligibility. It is this process of social division which weakens the bonds that unify society and which in turn creates obstacles to the introduction of a Basic Income.

The philosopher, John Rawls (1972), suggests that if we could get people to consider social questions under a *veil of ignorance* (that is, they don’t know where they will be placed in the final scheme of things) they might consider providing far more generous societal arrangements than when they think they know where and how they *are and will be* socially situated. The reality is that for the most part few, if any, of us knows what awaits us next week, next month or next year. Just around the corner might be a broken marriage, the sack, lung cancer, a horrific car accident or a plane crash on the way home from the next Basic

Income Earth Network Congress. The recent recession should have reinforced the financial uncertainty principle in our minds.

Guy Standing (2008 pp. 5-6) lists five principles to help evaluate whether a social policy is socially just. The principles most relevant to this paper suggest that:

A policy ...is socially just only if it improves the security of the least secure ...only if it does not impose controls on some groups that are not imposed on the most free ...if it enhances the rights of the recipient ...and limits the discretionary power of the provider (italics in original).

Standing points out that: “A right is possessed by virtue of a person’s humanity or citizenship, and cannot be made dependent on some behavioural conditionality (2008 p. 5).

In 1997, Philippe van Parijs said in relation to the potential public good of a toll-free bridge that “You may have never crossed that bridge, but the tomatoes you eat are cheaper or fresher or both because the bridge exists (p. 103)”. Much the same point can be made about the importance of introducing a universal Basic Income. You and I may never need to receive that Basic Income to survive but the certainty of such a financial backstop would make our lives more secure.

As a socialist, I have always favoured making income distribution more equal. This position was not adopted without seriously looking at what happens when people are sharing and caring, and when they reject gross disparities in wealth distribution. I was fortunate enough to spend several years working with Indigenous communities in the Top End of the Northern Territory and in Brisbane. I also had the opportunity to observe the only trial of Basic Income carried out in Australia at The Brotherhood of St Laurence in Melbourne in the 1970s (Liffman 1978). These opportunities reinforced my belief that egalitarian societies are better societies. In 2009, Kate Pickett and Richard Wilkinson’s book *The Spirit Level* provided empirical support for the belief that egalitarian societies are better societies and such multi-country analysis has been reinforced by the experience of the Namibian Basic Income trial (Haarmann et al. 2009).

Conclusion

The Australia in which I grew up was far less affluent but much more egalitarian than the one I live in at the end of the first decade of the 21st century. Thatcherism, Reaganomics, supply-side economics, the “greed is good” mentality of the “dog eat dog” world, the Washington Consensus, neo-liberalism, economic fundamentalism and many Australian variants of such forms of *meanness* have washed away much of the social solidarity which existed in my youth. The “do unto others as you would have others do unto you” mantra which gave birth to universal or nearly universal income support policies for children, the old, widows and those with disabilities is less often heard. Yes, people who received unemployment benefits were expected to be fit, ready and able to work, but they could not be forced to take jobs paid below the award wage. Australians then had learnt the lesson of the 1930s Depression and understood, when they looked into the eyes of unemployed people, that “There but for the grace of God go I.”

I cannot foresee a compelling ethical justification emerging in my country or any other Western English-speaking country for the introduction of a Basic Income in the near future. It is for this reason I argue that Basic Income advocates in those countries would be wise to

look to the republican justification for a Basic Income along the lines advocated by Raventos (2007). On the way to victory we need to acknowledge our debt to Thomas Paine (1797), Dennis Milner (1920), Juliet Rhys-Williams (1943) as well as to those lesser-known pioneers of Basic Income and to the more recent Basic Income advocates. But, for the foreseeable future, prospects for Basic Income are much brighter in continental Europe, South America and Southern Africa because it is there that the desire to *guarantee the material existence of all* is most clearly articulated and where the force of social solidarity is becoming ascendant.

I may be too pessimistic about the possibility of a Basic Income being introduced in Western English-speaking countries. There have been periods in Australia, Britain and New Zealand when considerable numbers of people struggled to implement the Marxist dictum 'From each according to their ability to each according to their need'. Such an egalitarian (Marxist) policy, if implemented, exceeds what a Basic Income could provide. A Basic Income only guarantees to pay the same amount to each permanent resident – leaving other social policies to attempt to implement greater equity. Adopting a Basic Income would not be an inconsequential step, because it redistributes from the better off to the less well off, it would substantially enhance egalitarianism.

There may be writers about to provide justifications for a Basic Income in Western English-speaking countries who can convince the likes of the dour Browns and the dull Rudds to implement truly universal policies. Or it may be that we just need to rediscover the excitement and invincibility of our childhood.

In January 2009, Ken Robinson described how education systems train students to constrain their ingenuity and enthusiasm. He recounted the story of the young girl in an Art Class whose teacher asked what it was that she was painting and was told "The face of God." The teacher responded "But no one has seen the face of God!" The girl replied "Well, they will soon."

If we could recapture such naive enthusiasm we might be able to place social solidarity and Basic Income at the centre of social policy even in Western English-speaking countries. I fear, however, that the lack of trust and the fear that someone else is getting something for nothing will stand in the way. The "greed is good" mentality still lingers in the minds of the power elites. Too many of them think it's all right for privileged individuals to get something for nothing - that is how they've lived their entire lives - but it is abhorrent that poor people should get justice, equality, decency, and humanity; let alone something for nothing. It is the rich who get the greatest advantage from government policies which stimulate the economy, provide short term government-backed loans to finance development projects or guarantee the survival of banks by guaranteeing deposits of up to \$1 million (as occurred in Australia during the recent recession). Such policies are just unencumbered handouts which the rich expect governments to provide. They see no need for governments to attach reciprocal obligations to them.

I have always resented being told I *must* do something. It mattered little whether it was because someone, in a position of authority wanted it done or because they actually believed it was in my best interests to do it. Likewise, I have always resented seeing other relatively powerless people being forced to carry out instructions such as 'work for the dole', undertake a specified study program, or meet imposed obligations. I don't know whether it is possible to separate anti-authoritarian attitudes from anti-paternalistic ones. I believe that at least the

poor (and probably everyone) would be advantaged if we were to adopt a universal Basic Income because, as Goodin (1992 p 195) notes: “Schemes that pay everyone an unconditional basic income are also *less presumptuous* than more conditional programmes of income support. . . less prying and intrusive, and in consequence less demeaning and debasing (italics in original).” And if we are to even go close to Rawlsian notions of justice (1972) we must choose policies which disadvantage the poorest citizens the least. Introducing a universal Basic Income would be a good first step along the way towards ensuring that the poor are assured of receiving economic security without oppressive obligations.

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