



La décroissance - DEGROWTH



Anthropocene



Bioeconomics

Acceptance Speech

2015 Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen Award (Unconventional Thinking)

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Receiving an award from a foreign country – India in this case ! – is a peculiar honor, a privilege, a distinction, a reward. It is an hopeful event in a cultural and personal story. In the same line of socio-anthropological thought of Marcel Mauss, it is a gift which involves a counter-gift, a few words of thanks, a formal Acceptance Speech. This social ritual of acknowledgements and gratitude, generally during a solemn ceremony, is part of a paradoxical tradition, because it is well known that nobody is a prophet in his own country (*nemo propheta in patria*).

However, when such an honoring prize is a reward from TERI, the famous Energy and Resources Institute of New Delhi, directed by the eminent Dr. Rajendra Pachauri, currently also the chairman of IPCC, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change which has been awarded (opportunely in my mind) the Nobel Peace Prize, and that this beautiful award is in the « Unconventional Thinking » category, in the spiritual, philosophical and scientific legacy of such an uneasy heterodox genius like the late Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, the most important mentor of mine together with the French philosopher Michel Serres, my means of public expression for my profound gratitude are very limited. For several reasons.

My English speaking or writing is not good enough. This award from India, with an international jury, is a big surprise for me. But also, of course, a welcome reward for my counter-current transdisciplinary academic itinerary, and my early efforts to promote Georgescu-Roegen's unanswered new bioeconomic perspective, against the mainstream economics and Eurocentric development theories. And, above all, I will be absent in New Delhi for the 2015 Delhi Sustainable Development Summit during which the Third Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen Awards are officially delivered.

As I wrote (Geneva, 20 December 2014 A.D.) to Dr. Pachauri :

(...) I thank you very very much. My gratitude goes also to the other members of the Jury and [your] Energy Research Institute.

It is after some hesitation that I send you here my acceptance of this wonderful award, in memory of my lamented beloved friend and mentor.

As (since 1974) a close friend, admirer, translator, collaborator, and disciple of the late professor Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, I developed (progressively and imperfectly) a personal commitment as a 'conscientious objector' (objecteur de conscience, in French) turned 'growth objector' (objecteur de croissance), and so I have finally (notably after my participation to the IPCC WG III Workshop on Equity and Social Considerations related to Climate Change, in Nairobi in July 1994) decided to stop my contributions to the recent growth of the air transportation large technical system (it is not a CO2 problem only). Now, I am a member of the Anthropocene Working Group within the International Commission on Stratigraphy. For me, at 68 [now 69], the warning of Global Warming is now clear enough, the time of my (our) addiction to 'industrial luxuries' is over (cf. Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, The Entropy Law and the Economic Problem, Distinguished Lecture at the University of Alabama, delivered December 3, 1970).

So I regret to inform you that I will unfortunately not be physically present in New Delhi in February 2015.

But I will be very present spiritually, with all my friendly sympathy, deep gratitude and acknowledgement.

I think, dear Dr. Pachauri, you are personally very well situated (as all Gandhian scholars, and as IPCC's chairperson) to understand my uneasy choice, according to my own 'unconventional' voluntary simplicity lifestyle.

I trust that you will inform the other members of the Jury of my grateful acceptance of the Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen Awards, and also of my moral decision to stop flying and take « degrowth » seriously.

Thank you again for this award. With my humble wishes, peace, non-violence and enjoyment of living within the planet Earth's Biosphere for all!