

Feedback by Prof Richard Norgaard for my 3rd and 4th PhD progress reports

My PhD: Why does mainstream economics ignore ecology?

Official PhD topic: The place of ecology in undergraduate economics education; the case in three European countries (La place de l'écologie dans l'enseignement de premier cycle en Science Economique: le cas de trois pays européens) - Ecole Doctorale, Università di Corsica

My 3rd and 4th PhD progress reports can be downloaded here (see comments):

<https://www.tuncalik.com/2019/08/why-does-mainstream-economics-ignore-ecology-my-3-phd-progress-report-august-2019/>

Who is Richard Norgaard?

Richard Norgaard is Professor Emeritus of Energy and Resources at the University of California, Berkeley, where he taught for forty-three years. Norgaard is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, a recipient of the Boulding Award for Ecological Economics, and one of the founders of the field of ecological economics. He was a lead author of the 5th Assessment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2014) and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005). He chaired the State of California's Delta Independent Science Board from 2010 to 2013 and currently serves as a member. Reference: <https://greattransition.org/contributor/richard-norgaard>

Richard Norgaard Professor Emeritus

<https://erg.berkeley.edu/people/norgaard-richard/>

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I have lots of references and quotations from Prof Norgaard in my [4th progress report](#). One of them is the following:

In his article named [Economism and the Econocene: a coevolutionary interpretation](#), economist Richard Norgaard has a paragraph about the evolution of the Western conception of soil (page 18):

"... historically we understood soils mostly as physical and then later as chemical systems. While we now understand soils more as biological systems, or biogeochemical systems, our understanding of the agricultural soils that exist today is more complete, and thus better, when we incorporate how we had historically transformed these biogeochemistry systems through plowing and the application of fertilizers based on our earlier, dominantly physical and chemical, understanding of soils."

(Norgaard R, 2018)

Norgaard's feedback for my 3rd and 4th PhD progress reports (emails)

Email on 19. August 2020

You have provided us with a grand amount of material, and I have only sampled here and there, but I can provide a little material that might help.

Prof Norgaard sent me two draft chapters (1 and 19) of his upcoming book American Economism.

I have a PhD in economics from the University of Chicago. I did not go there to become a believer and even join the priesthood. I went there to understand how patients in the mental asylum thought. I went as an ethnographer visiting a tribal culture. The material / tribal ways were

surprisingly easy to learn in this way. Problems occurred when I "came out". But I was able to get tenure first. Anyway, my first piece of advice to you is to see what your economist advisor will "accept", ask him, and let that be a part of what you learn but do not put into your PhD thesis. Save that for the book later.

When I was an associated professor and started conceiving of human history and environmental change as a coevolutionary process between five systems: environment, knowledge, values, technology, and social organization, my colleagues in economics who were in charge of my pay increases and eventually promotion to full professor were very clear. I had to show how this contributed to standard economics or was better than standard economics. The idea that there could be another pattern of thinking, even though there are clearly multiple patterns within economics, was an anathema to them. I was an associate professor for 17 years, more than twice what was normal, and they promoted me to full professor when I temporarily did some more standard economics, sustainability as intergenerational equity ... but soon the profession chose to neglect our overlapping generations models because we argued that norms from beyond economics were required a la welfare economics.

I am attaching a incomplete draft chapter of the book I am writing on American Economism that addresses how the whole idea of land disappeared from American economics even though land was fundamental in the beginnings of economics and the history of America. This chapter provides enough documentation that you can retrace and verify what I am arguing from the literature and argue it apart from this unpublished draft chapter.

I am also attaching the introductory chapter to my book in order to give you an idea of how I have come to rationalize how economists behave.

Lastly, your whole concern is that economists do not consider ecology ... which starts with the premise that everything is connected to everything else ... yet economics starts with land being divisible into parts that can be owned as property. Of course they do not consider ecology. It is antithetical to economics. Economists do not even consider the first and second laws of thermodynamics. Their equations do not materially and energetically balance left and right and this error is where externalities appear.

Email on 23. August 2020

About the Western ideology of progress and racism

I root much of racism to the supposed superiority of Enlightenment thinking, noting how dominant powers accept people of other "races" when they become enlightened .. hence Native American children who were taken away from their parents and sent to boarding schools to enlighten them and change their ways. And hence the full acceptance of Amartya Sen and his fine work that is mildly critical by pitting ideals of the Enlightenment against what has come about with little reference to other cultures. So, yes, I will be addressing racism front and center, though it is not highlighted in the introduction.

As a response to my question about writing an academic article on "ecosystem mutilation and patching business"

... on your own work, you may be able to write an article on your theme of how destroying nature provides subsequent business opportunities by describing the next economy adapting to and mitigating climate change through engineering and contrast that with a more ecological course.

Alternatively, I can see an article that starts with our economies's and economists' inabilities to be prepared for and handle Covid-19 to make your broader arguments about the disconnects between sustaining nature and leading meaningful lives with justice for all.

I can imagine such an article for Ecological Economics, Society and Ecology, or Real-World Economic Review. You will need to keep your argument tight and with references even while your point is a broad one. And tying this back to the disciplinary nature of science is probably also important.