

Προσφώνηση στον Καθηγητή John Geanakoplos (Yale University) κατά τη διάρκεια τελετής αναγόρευσης του σε επίτιμο διδάκτορα του Οικονομικού Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών.

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Κυρίες και κύριοι

Είναι πραγματικά μια εξαιρετική ημέρα για το Τμήμα μας και το Πανεπιστήμιο σήμερα. Από τη μία έχουμε την τελετή αποφοίτησης προπτυχιακών φοιτητών και φοιτητριών μας, μια ιδιαίτερα σημαντική στιγμή για τον καθένα από αυτούς και άρα για το Τμήμα. Από την άλλη έχουμε την ιδιαίτερη χαρά να έχουμε μαζί μας έναν από τους κορυφαίους και περισσότερο γνωστούς οικονομολόγους στον κόσμο, τον John Geanakoplos. Η ανακήρυξή του σε επίτιμο διδάκτορα είναι η ύψιστη τιμή από το Πανεπιστήμιο, όμως στην πραγματικότητα είναι ο κος Geanakoplos που μας τιμά σήμερα με την παρουσία του. Είναι συνηθισμένο στα καλύτερα πανεπιστήμια του κόσμου να παραβρίσκονται σε τελετές αποφοίτησης κορυφαίες προσωπικότητες, αλλά σπάνιο στη χώρα μας. Είμαστε λοιπόν ιδιαίτερα χαρούμενοι σήμερα.

Μέρος της προσφώνησης και η αντιφώνηση του κου Geanakoplos θα είναι στα αγγλικά, για αυτό το λόγο η διάρκειά τους θα είναι σύντομη. Ζητώ την κατανόηση όσων από τους επισκέπτες μας δεν θα μπορούν να παρακολουθήσουν. Η συνέχεια της τελετής θα είναι στα ελληνικά.

Πολλές φορές, οι επίσημες τελετές μπορεί να μην έχουν ουσία, όμως νομίζω ότι η σημερινή έχει έναν πολύ έντονο και σημαντικό συμβολισμό, ιδιαίτερα σε μια δύσκολη εποχή για την κοινωνία μας. Το Πανεπιστήμιο και όλοι μας τιμά ένα άνθρωπο με ελληνικές ρίζες που βρίσκεται εδώ και καιρό στην ακαδημαϊκή κορυφή, διαμορφώνει την οικονομική σκέψη σε παγκόσμιο επίπεδο, προσφέρει με κάθε τρόπο στους φοιτητές και συναδέλφους του αλλά και νοιάζεται βαθιά για τον τόπο από τον οποίο κατάγεται.

Επιτρέψτε μου να συνεχίσω στα αγγλικά.

John Geanakoplos was born in 1955 in Urbana, Illinois. He finished his high school studies at Hopkins School at New Haven, Connecticut, a place where he is returning from time to time to talk to the current students about the economy. In 1970, he won the United States Junior Open Chess Championship. He received his B.A. in Mathematics at Yale University at 1975 and a PhD in Economics at Harvard at 1980. His doctoral thesis, on "Four essays on the model of Arrow and Debreu" was supervised by Kenneth Arrow, considered by many as the most influential economist of our times. He then returned to Yale as an assistant professor, and he was promoted to Full professor at 1986. In 1994 he received the most prestigious Chair at Yale, named after the famous economist James Tobin. From 1996-2005 he was the director of the Cowles Foundation, one if not the most historic and influential foundation for research in Economics

Geanakoplos has visited Berkeley, Cambridge, the University of Pennsylvania, MIT and many other Universities. He directed the economics program at the Santa Fe Institute in 1990-1991 and in 1999-2000, and he remains an SFI external professor. He has received numerous extremely prestigious awards. He was elected a fellow of the Econometric Society in 1990 and of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1999. He was awarded the Alfred

Sloan Fellowship, Samuelson Prize in 1999 for work on lifetime financial security. In 1994 he was awarded the first Bodossaki Prize in economics, the most prestigious academic prize in Greece. He has served in the Editorial boards of most of the top journals in economic theory and directed the research of several excellent doctoral candidates, who have become prominent contributors to our profession.

Geanakoplos has made important research contributions to many areas of economic theory, including microeconomics, macroeconomics, the economics of information, oligopoly theory, game theory and finance. I would like to strongly recommend that you look at his cv on the web: his papers are essentially an overview of the progress made in much of economic theory over the last 30 years. Many of his contributions are now classics, taught in every top graduate school. Allow me to single out his work on general equilibrium and overlapping generations, much of it joint with another famous Greek economist, Herakles Polemarchakis, general equilibrium and inefficiency with incomplete asset markets, asymmetric information and common knowledge in games, stationary markov equilibria, and social security.

Most recently Geanakoplos has made a very influential intellectual and policy intervention in the analysis of the financial and economic crisis, focusing on excessive debt and in particular on what he calls the leverage. His work has been published in the top academic journals, such as the *American Economic Review*, but also has been heard carefully by policy makers world-wide.

John has Greek roots. He could have any award in the world, but it is these roots that make his presence here today important. His mother, Effie Geanakoplos, was a clinical social worker and instructor in psychiatry at the Yale Child Study Center. His father, Deno John Geanakoplos, was one of the most well-known scholars in the world: he has served as Bradford Durfee Professor Emeritus of Byzantine History, Renaissance History, and Orthodox Church History at Yale University. His work showed the pivotal role that Byzantine scholars who emigrated to Italy played in unlocking and interpreting ancient Greek texts vital to the Italian Renaissance, systematically documenting their interactions in the west. He deeply probed the encounters between the Greek and Roman churches over centuries of recurring schism and attempted reunion. He was the first Orthodox lay person invited to attend Vatican Council II in 1962. In 1966, he was awarded the Greek government's highest honor, the Gold Cross of the Order of King George I, for his contributions to Hellenic culture. Before becoming a historian, he studied music and played in the first violin section in the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra under Dimitri Mitropoulos. He joined the faculty at Yale in 1967. When John joined Yale in 1980, they became only the third father-son pair to be tenured professors concurrently in the university's history.

John has been instrumental for creating the Hellenic Studies center at Yale, and helping promote Greek ideas and people. Like many people of Greek roots, he is more Greek than many people living here. As some personal information communicated by people who know him, when it came to putting his two sons Konstantine and Philip-Alexander to bed, when they were younger, the music of John's choice for a "nanourisma" was by Mikis Theodorakis. Perhaps the children may have had trouble sleeping right away, with Theodorakis, but I am sure he must have succeeded in passing some Greek essence to them. By the way, Kostantine is graduating this year from Hopkins the high school where John went and he is continuing at Yale!

At a more personal level I have been deeply moved by the fact that John has been very generous with his time to support a summer school we have started with colleagues from ten years ago with the goal of helping our Greek doctoral students and junior colleagues here and abroad. Not only his talks have always been the highlight of the conference but also he is very willing to talk and coach the young people as they attempt to proceed with science.

Let me conclude in Greek. Ο John Geanakoplos είναι ένας πραγματικά εξαιρετικός οικονομολόγος, με ιδιαίτερα κοφτερό μυαλό και διαίσθηση, που άλλαξε με το έργο του τον τρόπο που κατανοούμε τα οικονομικά φαινόμενα γύρω μας. Είναι επίσης ένας υποδειγματικός ακαδημαϊκός άνθρωπος και βαθύς στοχαστής με μακρόχρονη συνεπή προσφορά στο Πανεπιστήμιο και όλους τους χώρους από όπου πέρασε. Τέλος είναι ένας άνθρωπος, με βαθιά αίσθηση προσφοράς στους τριγύρω - μπορεί να συνομιλεί με τους ηγέτες του κόσμου αλλά δεν διστάζει ούτε στιγμή να αφιερώσει χρόνο σε όλους τους φοιτητές και συναδέλφους του. Είναι αλήθεια ότι η παρουσία του στο μίζερο και θλιβερό περιβάλλον αυτού του κτιρίου σήμερα ίσως είναι λίγο παράταιρη. Στις πολύ δύσκολες εποχές για τη χώρα μας η αντίθεση που δημιουργεί η παρουσία του Geanakoplos, ελπίζω ότι μπορεί να λειτουργήσει ως φάρος και πρόκληση προοπτικής και αισιοδοξίας για κάθε έναν από τους αποφοίτους μας σήμερα και για όλους εμάς.

We are honored by the presence of Prof Geanakoplos in our University and we deeply and humbly thank him.