

ACME : “open data” and “open science” in a “peer review”

This text was first an oral communication in two languages (French and German) at the 6th International Conference of Critical Geography held in Frankfurt in August, 2011 (“Crisis - Causes, Dimensions, and Reactions”) in a workshop having as topic: “Babel crisis - Critic through translation?”. This communication was accomplished by Karl R. KEGLER, Georges NICOLAS and Anne RADEFF, with the common title of: “Central places. Translation as “normalization” of an erroneous theory”. (KEGLER, NICOLAS and RADEFF, 2011).

The chairpersons of this workshop proposed us after to publish our communication in the E-Journal *ACME (An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies)*. Two anonymous reviewers (REVIEWERS, 2013) made comments on these texts with an injunction to perform “major modifications”. As factual errors accompanied these comments (we signal some of them above) and as the required modifications implied abandonment and inversion of the problematics developed in our texts, we refused to do them.

Indeed, there is no possible recourse against anonymous reviewers’ decisions; more: if we had agreed to revise our texts, these would have been again subjected to reviewers. Furthermore, there was no question to examine their competence or even simply to point out that they were not aware of the latest researches in German and American archives! Finally, our proposal to publish our texts with those of the reviewers, so that the readers could confront them, was not even examined. The proposed process could be endless or interrupted in an arbitrary way by the editorial board of *ACME*.

Our exchange with the French editorial board of *ACME* shows consequently that “peer-reviews” system is: “a crap shoot. Personal vendettas, ideological conflicts, professional jealousies, methodological disagreements, sheer self-promotion, and a great deal of plain incompetence and irresponsibility are no strangers to the scientific world; indeed, that world is rife with these all-too-human attributes. In no event can peer review ensure that research is correct in its procedures or its conclusions.” (HIGGS, 2007).

ACME is indeed an “open access” but not an “open science” E-Journal. In “open access”, the “experts” (reviewers) have absolute censure powers, while in “open science” the articles are first published and then valued; as a result, there is no preliminary censure. “This publication [in “open science”], *a priori* without effort, is in reality efficient, because it raises the level of requirement to which research must give satisfaction. Indeed, articles remain on the Internet site, even if they are refused after valuation. And valuation too remains. Experts make therefore more efforts, because their job and their names are published. As for the authors, they prefer controlling their studies once more, before having to lead publicly debates with the experts and so making scientific discourse public.” (AMRHEIM, 2014)

We therefore decided to disclose this text on Cyberato, website where opposite opinions are accepted and public critical debate encouraged. We reviewed it in the following manner: it was not a question of

respecting the directives of the reviewers-censors but of deepening our proofs allowing examining their opinions in a critical way. These options reflect a view shared by many researchers and academics who separate in a a-critical way Walter Christaller's ideology and his "system of central places" which is neither a theory, because it is refuted, nor a scientific model, because it is geometrically false. This being said, we widely augmented the part of our text dedicated to Baskin's thesis, very critical regarding Walter Christaller and which was probably not read by both *ACME* reviewers-censors.

RADEFF Anne et NICOLAS Georges, Monday, 10 November 2014

Pour citer :

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