

**GRANT OF A DOCTORATE  
HONORIS CAUSA  
BY EMORY UNIVERSITY  
TO PROF. MANDELBROT**

*Words of thanks*

It is a delight to be here. I am very grateful to my friends Arnold Mandell and Fereydoon Family for recommending me, and to President Chace and your Board of Trustees for accepting their recommendation.

What does this honor bring to me? My work first became widely known in 1982 and has been recognized by prizes, chairs and Academies. But I also received something few academics know, namely, broad popular recognition. In fact, to reveal the whole truth, the early eighties witnessed a genuine fad for fractals. This was to me a source of mixed feelings - including concern -- because fads do not last and I heard they tend to leave a bitter after taste. Then one shiny day a dear friend, a brilliant man whom I sorely miss, exclaimed to me. "You are lucky, fractals are no longer a fad; they have become a style." This honorary doctorate suggests that my friend was right. They make me feel good and you make me feel good. Thank you.

But what does this honor bring to you, the students and their parents? There is a widely held notion that honorary degree recipients are meant to serve as examples to follow. I might indeed be yet another example of the value of persistent and extremely

hard work and absolute adherence to principle. But I am an old man, not rich, who has not yet decided in which area to specialize. Therefore you must not take me as an example to follow. You should not decide on your career too soon, but well before age 78.

Moreover, I am a compulsive gambler. Even if successful, a gambler remains a gambler, an example of utter folly. Besides, the riches I won do not enable me to add anything to this University's endowment. To the contrary, my work continues to depend on existing endowments. Today, science is a highly organized collective activity but I gambled on a "contrarian" tactic that grew into a strategy. I did not know that word but I put together a mixed bag of neglected facts which I thought would reward attention. They certainly did -- in due time -- but 'twas a bumpy ride. My being here proves that I survived. Two institutions helped: IBM Research in its days of glory in pure science and Yale University now.

Time to go deeper in revealing the truth, then to conclude. Of the awards it received, the one that represents my work best is the "Science and Art Prize." It has been written that in the beginning was the word. An anthropologist friend of mine said that human civilization started when food was altered by being cooked and flavored with salt and spices. I rather think that the image came first. In any event, I encourage you to worship those three qualities together.