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## The Holberg Committee Citation: Joan Martinez-Alier

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Professor Joan Martinez-Alier is a world-leading scholar of ecological economics, political ecology, and environmental justice. His transdisciplinary research integrates social and natural sciences, proposing a humanities-driven form of economics. He is based at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), at the Institute of Environmental Science and Technology.

Martinez-Alier is highly influential in diverse fields. These range from anthropology, geography, environmental studies and political economy to agrarian studies, and the analysis of food systems. He is a major figure and leading public intellectual in the burgeoning movement for 'degrowth' and agroecology. Analytically clear, his critiques of mainstream economic theory raise questions about the dominant focus on economic growth as the sole metric of a good economy. His approach rejects economic models based on extracting resources from the environment to support material accumulation and consumption. Instead, his economic framework centres human and environmental flourishing, creating an alternative, pluralistic theory of value for determining economic judgements. The empirical basis of his theory draws on extensive and long-term research conducted in a variety of global contexts.

Based on participatory research methods, his analysis emerges from dialogue with indigenous and non-western forms of life and knowledge. A central concern of Martinez-Alier's work is how environmental questions are inseparable from analysis of historical injustices and ongoing inequalities. These injustices raise questions concerning the 'ecological debt' that so-called 'developed nations' owe formerly colonized countries.

Two of his most influential books are *Ecological Economics: Energy, Environment and Society* (with Klaus Schlüpmann, 1987) and *The Environmentalism of the Poor: A Study of Ecological Conflicts and Valuation* (2002). *Ecological Economics* traces the history of ecological critiques of economics from the 1860s to the 1940s. It was a major catalyst in the development of political ecology through its articulation of a different tradition of economic thought.

*The Environmentalism of the Poor* examines the relationship between environmental conflicts and poverty. The book overturns assumptions that there is a necessary conflict between improving the economic well-being of the poor and attaining environmental sustainability.

Martinez-Alier is a founding member of the International Society for Ecological Economics. He also founded the Institute of Environmental Science and Technology (ICTA-UAB) at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. The Institute is a multidisciplinary centre promoting the study of the nature and causes of environmental problems, and seeks constructive policies that enable transition to a sustainable economy. A key part of its work is the Environmental Justice Atlas that documents environmental justice struggles around the world.

Martinez-Alier has the unusual distinction of both anticipating and actively engaging with the interrelated planetary challenges of poverty, climate change, and food security. His innovative theories and mentorship continue to build the capacity of new scholars and policy makers to address these intersecting crises of global economic life.

Joan Martinez-Alier is undoubtedly a highly worthy recipient of the 2023 Holberg Prize.

On behalf of the Holberg Committee,

Heike Krieger, Committee Chair