

Economy and Humanism

This issue of *Cultura Económica*, dedicated to exploring various aspects of a humanistic approach to Economy, also aims to be a tribute in life to Miguel Alfonso Martínez-Echevarría. Miguel Alfonso was born in Malaga in 1943, and obtained a PhD degree in Theoretical Physics at the University of Valencia in 1974, but devoted much of his life to reflection, teaching and philosophical research on Economics. He proves a long and varied teaching career as a Professor of several Spanish Universities: the University of Murcia, the Autonomous University of Madrid, the University College San Pablo CEU, the University of Valladolid and the University of the Basque Country. Since 1982, and until his retirement in 2014, he has been a full-time Professor at the Faculty of Economic and Business Sciences of the University of Navarra, where he taught for years the subjects “History of economic thought”, “History of business thinking” and “Philosophy of Economy”.

Along his career, he has held numerous managerial positions being Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Business Sciences of the University of Navarra from 1987 to 1992. Miguel Alfonso is also a corresponding academic at the Royal Academy of Economic and Financial Sciences of Barcelona and he was Visiting Scholar of the Department of Harvard University Economics department in 1993. In recent years, he has devoted himself to research in economic theory and, especially, to the philosophy of economics, with his main lines of research being the political and social dimension of the company and business and economic ethics. Author of *Directing companies: from theory to reality* and *Rethinking work*, he has participated in numerous conferences, symposiums and

discussions in European and American universities, directed dozens of doctoral theses and published innumerable articles in Spanish and international journals. In mid-2104, having reached the age of 70, he withdrew from the formal academic setting. Currently, he continues with his research work and collaborates as a counselor in several public and private policy initiatives. His committed and exemplary work continues to serve as a guide for a large number of disciples around the world.

Now, what are the reasons why we want to pay homage to Miguel Alfonso in *Cultura Económica*? Basically because we think that he is one of the best representatives of humanism in Economics. Having started in Physics and then specialized in the statistical aspects of Economics, he soon discovered that the latter was a human and social science very different from the natural sciences. That is why he devoted himself to studying in depth its philosophical and anthropological foundations. He thus discovered the cultural, political and above all ethical dimension of this science, and that Economics is never pure theory but always thought linked to action. Hence his dedication to the most typical place in which economic action takes place: the company. In fact, he devoted much of his studies to understand the company not only as a unit of production, but as a human community in which multiple purposes, that go far beyond profit, converge. In this sense, he also dedicated much of his efforts as a teacher and researcher to understand the nature and ultimate meaning of work as the center of all economic activity and as a key aspect of all human activity. In addition, there is an essential dimension that is not absent from its economic humanism: faith. In Miguel Alfonso it is clear that the human and Christian dimension of existence also opens up to new and for a purely technical or aseptically positivist view unimagined perspectives and horizons to the economy.

As a tribute to this rich academic and vital career, we offer our readers an article by Ricardo F. Crespo that gives us a reflection on an aspect that is a central part of Miguel Alfonso's path: Epistemology and the Economics Methodology. We also publish a work on the subject of the gift in Economics, so important in recent years, by Antonio Moreno Almárcegui, and Germán Scalzo. Likewise, we present an article by Alberto Vargas on the crisis of modern economic science. Next, we publish two works by our honoree. The first is formed by a set of texts on university life selected by Germán Scalzo. The second, entitled "Two visions of economic rationality" was published years ago in our journal and offers us a comparative approach to the two ways in which the study of economics can be addressed today. Finally, we also present three more essays by Rafael Alvira, Álvaro Perpere Viñuales and Carlos Hoewel on three topics dear to our honoree: humanism in the company, the Aristotelian vision of Economy and Spanish economic humanism.

In the academic sphere, homages are an act of justice and gratitude. Our conviction is that, as far as possible, tributes should be made in life. This allows us to share with Miguel Alfonso the satisfaction of contemplating a path not yet complete but full of meaning not only for the protagonist but also for those who witness his vital summit. A society's culture is enriched with that richness. And Economy is also nourished from it.

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