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## **Jerzy Bartmiński – Citoyen du monde**

### **Jerzy Bartmiński – obywatel świata**

This year, towards the end of winter, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February, at the age of eighty-two, the Polish ethnolinguist, Jerzy Bartmiński, died. The beautiful and grandiose funeral service given by Lublin's Bishop, Adam Bab, joined by a dozen high-ranking members of the clergy, and Prof. Andrzej Szostek, the ex-President of the Catholic University, who gave the homily, made it perfectly obvious that the great linguist will be missed and will be remembered as a man of unswerving conviction and spirit.

His wife, children, students, colleagues and friends in themselves numbered over one thousand people, and the expression of grief around Poland and beyond its borders made it necessary to open up the service by putting it online, so that over three hundred people could join together to show their respect. It would be pointless to list all the notables, but the fact that Jerzy Bartmiński was sent on his way to the world beyond by the Member of Parliament Joanna Mucha, the City's Mayor Krzysztof Żuk, the Marshal of Lublin Voivodship Jarosław Stawiarski, the President of UMCS Radosław Dobrowolski, the President of State Higher East-European School (PWSWE) in Przemyśl Paweł Treffer, shows only too clearly that Jerzy Bartmiński was more than a scholar: he was a man of society, a man whose words and work made an impact on the way Lublin was growing as a community and the way Poland was evolving as a nation. He was a patriot who pondered the nature of the social fabric that weaves a people together; someone who strove to explain the origins and the potential of a people that comes together

today and tomorrow and can achieve great things, if individuals manage to understand who they are and why they belong together.

For all those working in the field, Professor Bartmiński was not only a great scholar, he was a great source of inspiration. An organiser by nature, with an impressive – but not obsessive – capacity for work, he was truly inspired by a sense of vocation. He was called to his work, and he answered that call. And he kindled and cradled the great projects he launched and directed.

In truth, he could be a hard master, and many people found it more comfortable working with Jerzy Bartmiński at a distance. His conviction and drive was so strong that he risked swallowing up other peoples' lives and inducing them to devote most of their energies to his great projects. This is the fate of the man who stares unswervingly into the future and draws others to him, not to serve him or his person, but to serve the greater social, intellectual and cultural project that he helps us to shape together.

Born in 1939 into a family of Galician craftsmen, in Przemyśl, with his first wife and children he founded one of the first Home Catholic Renewal projects in Lublin, where, in 1971, he defended his PhD in Philology, focusing on folklore. He went on to put Lublin on the map as the founder and director of the Lublin School of Ethnolinguistics, an inspiration for his Polish and international colleagues. And scholars beyond Poland's borders throughout Europe know him as the founder and director of the multilingual EUROJOS project that federated a vast European network of scholars working on language and worldview in the context of European values.

Jerzy Bartmiński was a Slavic scholar with a Slavic soul, and he remained faithful to his friends and colleagues in Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Croatia, Serbia and Bulgaria, and he was a crucial influence on the contemporary Prague School of Cultural Linguistics. He loved the Slavic peoples and cultures in all their diversity. But Jerzy Bartmiński leaned westward. He had his feet firmly planted in the soil of Lublin – in what is now the East of Poland. But for him, Lublin was part of the historic centre of the homeland of the Polish people. For Jerzy Bartmiński, Poland was not “in the East” but at the very centre of Europe. In the same way, at heart, he believed that the soul of language lies in both the here and now, and the beyond and the above. He loved both the touch of the earth and the infinite boundlessness of the imagination. The taste of honey and vodka, and the flavour of soulful local folk songs. And throughout his research into language and folklore, from the representation of plants, valleys, hills, rivers, lakes, fields and plains and forests in language and literature and in the everyday expressions of Polish-speakers, he reached deeply into the rich soil of his homeland while striving

to reach up and open up to the spiritual sphere. Because for Jerzy Bartmiński the two worlds are not separate, and the spirit is all-enveloping. In this sense, celebrating words and things was ultimately about celebrating Creation.

Unquestionably, Jerzy Bartmiński was a friend to the great German founder of the Berlin University who put language at the very centre of the university, Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835). Like Wilhelm von Humboldt, Jerzy Bartmiński's work showed that words are about worldviews, individual and collective sensibilities that are learned and expressed through language. But his love of the matter of the earth and Creation makes Jerzy Bartmiński in some respects closer to the linguist's brother, the great explorer, geologist, free-thinker-scientist, Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859). And for this reason, it is perhaps no coincidence that the greatest works of these two scholars are both entitled *Kosmos*. Both thinkers shared something of Goethe's intuition, and perceived and conceived of each detail or facet of existence as a part of a greater whole, a meaningful project of immense and irrepressible potential. And something of the spirit of striving, yearning, and lust to know (what the Germans speak of as *streben*, and *Sehnsucht*) animates all of Jerzy Bartmiński's labours of love and his investigations into the universe of language.

There is no doubt that the influence of Jerzy Bartmiński will not wane. The human, intellectual, cultural and human qualities of his numerous students are such that further projects will bear him "spiritual grandchildren" who will go on to create new projects and paradigms. The great support and the inspiration for the second part of his life, his second wife, Stanisława Niebrzegowska-Bartmińska, is continuing the work of Lublin, animated by a clear-sighted understanding of what Polish words and worldviews mean for people and what they can contribute to the ongoing construction of the European project. His students and collaborators, professors Jan Adamowski and Grażyna Bączkowska, established researchers and academics like Urszula Majer-Baranowska, Małgorzata Brzozowska, Joanna Szadura, Marta Nowosad-Bakalarczyk, Katarzyna Prorok, Anna Kaczan, Agata Bielak, Sebastian Wasiuta, do credit to him and to their fields of study. And Lublin has continued to produce a new generation of scholars and teachers with Jerzy's other major students: the professors at UMCS, Anna Pajdzińska, Ryszard Tokarski, Maria Wojtak, Jan Mazur, Halina Pelc, and Władysława Bryła, and the university professors Katarzyna Smyk, Marta Wójcicka, Dr Grzegorz Żuk, who benefited from Jerzy Bartmiński's guidance as they made their ways in their careers.

Professor Wojciech Chlebda's post-doc dissertation was reviewed by Jerzy Bartmiński and this led to his joining the EUROJOS project and

playing a crucial role in editing the volume on *EUROPE*, the Axiological Lexicon published in 2018. Jerzy Bartmiński's translators, like Adam Głaz, who himself is the author of important work in the field of translation studies, language and worldview,<sup>1</sup> always found time to spread the words and thoughts of Jerzy Bartmiński. And indeed, one of the remarkable characteristics about Jerzy Bartmiński's activities, was the way lasting friendships were created around him between the people he brought together. "The French connection" that brought together Maciej Abramowicz, Arkadiusz Koselak, Adam Głaz and myself, and that went on to stimulate various multilingual, Franco-Spanish, Anglo-Polish, Czecho-German encounters was in large part sparked off by the "bonhomie" and generous inquiring intelligence of Jerzy Bartmiński. Discernment, discretion, and dedication to his project were no doubt the three Ds that enabled Jerzy Bartmiński to "animate" the life and soul (*anima*) of human investigations into language and culture.

This was because Jerzy Bartmiński was a man of dialogue, and he let others speak, and speak to each other. If you want to understand what makes men great, it's worth considering the way they cultivate, encourage and celebrate the works and associations that grow up around them rather than belittling them in the Will to Power and Self-Aggrandisement. In Jerzy Bartmiński, I never recall seeing anything of those human failings that we academics are all susceptible to, envy and resentment. This made Jerzy Bartmiński a great listener. Indeed, the polyglot German scholar Jörg Zinken, once at the University of Portsmouth, now at the University of Mannheim, remembers wandering through the hills and valleys on the borders of Poland with Jerzy Bartmiński twenty years ago interviewing Polish people and analysing their dialects and sayings. Questionnaires were fundamental starting points for reflecting on, and responding to, others in his academic and everyday community.

Jerzy Bartmiński contributed to other schools without competing with them, for the simple reason that he saw their worth: his own school was not challenged by them, but rather enriched by dialoguing with them. Jerzy Bartmiński played a crucial role, for example, in helping us in Rouen, Normandy, France, when he, Maciej Abramowicz, and Adam Głaz came to help us launch the Rouen Ethnolinguistics Project, with its online multilingual lectures, when they recorded their conferences on translating "freedom", "home", "Heimat" and "homeland" in 2014 and 2015 (homeland | Rouen Ethnolinguistics Project (univ-rouen.fr)).

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<sup>1</sup> Adam Głaz, *Linguistic Worldview(s): Approaches and Applications*, New York and London: Routledge, 2022.

There are, however, at least three Jerzy Bartmińskis, and when we wish to do homage to the man and his work, we should distinguish between them. If you love something, it is worth trying to understand the beauty of its parts and the way they work together, and this is surely true of the appreciation we should show to Jerzy Bartmiński's legacy. We, who have other qualities and concerns, other languages, other objectives, other colleagues and other projects, must recognise that we are not able to grasp or to embrace all of the wide-ranging projects and objects of study that Jerzy Bartmiński embraced. This is perhaps true of all of us. He was without doubt a man of the times he lived through, but those were other times, and those times shaped the ways he gave form to his projects. So perhaps by understanding those times and projects we will see more clearly how our world is changing and how our own projects must evolve if we are to respond to our times. If we are to seize something crucial in the *élan vital* of Jerzy Bartmiński's legacy, we have to recognize the complexity of his sensibility. And how we can respond to it.

Great men often suffer from their followers as much as from their enemies. The dangers are somewhat predictable. Certain students try vainly to hold onto the master by venerating him or her with a slavish and dogmatic adherence. Some carve the master up and wish to make "their" mentor the only one. Others take a single spark of inspiration to kindle fires that would burn down half of what the great man has built. Unconcerned with the man and the work, they make a bonfire to wage their own wars. Is that the best way to do homage to the founder of the Lublin School of Ethnolinguistics? What legacy does Jerzy Bartmiński leave us, and what new leaders will it produce? Only God knows, and only time will tell. Jerzy Bartmiński cannot know. Ultimately great influencers look at the next generation with curiosity, love and perplexity, only half-recognizing what they themselves have come to mean for younger thinkers and scholars. And we should look on Jerzy Bartmiński with the same friendly curiosity, trying to understand in what ways we resemble him, how we differ, and what we can do and what we can become as academics, thinking and feeling in language.

Who were the three Jerzy Bartmińskis?

There was the Polish scholar who remained up to the very end a lover of languages and a lover of his maternal culture and folklore. Jerzy Bartmiński was a Pole, a proud but enlightened patriot, who was forever fascinated by song lyrics, poems, sayings derived from the Bible but handed down from mothers to children, from father to son. Novels, newspapers, and political rhetoric were all fundamental concerns for him and expressions of the rich and turbulent controversies and conflicts that his Poland was forced to

engage in throughout his life. This wide-ranging intellectual curiosity and artistic sensibility gives his work a rare quality, a poetic profundity, that was balanced by a political lucidity, and ideological clarity. Jerzy Bartmiński saw deeply into things, and he saw clearly. He knew what he thought about life and he knew what he felt about language, culture and the Polish worldviews in all their diversity.

There was the international scholar, the friend of Anna Wierzbicka, the Polish-Australian founder of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage based in Canberra, at the Australian National University. He was the friend of the great Moscow scholars, Nikita and Svetlana Tolstaya, the friend of Irena Vaňková, who launched cultural cognitive linguistics in Prague. First and foremost, for those people, Jerzy Bartmiński played the role of the Slavic scholar. And I know of no-one who managed to hold workshops in which more than a dozen scholars of Slavic languages came together to express themselves and make themselves understood, in their unity and their diversity, in their mother tongues. While many international conferences are in danger of slipping into a policy of “English is Enough”, Jerzy Bartmiński’s meetings proved far richer and ultimately more conducive to expressing the sensibilities of Slavic experts of folklore, languages, and worldviews.

The third Jerzy Bartmiński was a staunch European who believed in its history, its values, and its vocation as a moral, cultural and intellectual tradition with a vocation that had to be understood, celebrated, critically appraised, and defended. European scholars will remember this third Jerzy Bartmiński, the man who launched the great EUROJOS project that strove, in the first decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, to establish what values Europeans share and what values characterise each European language and worldview.

Ultimately, the point I would like to make here is that there was no incoherence or incompatibility in the three distinct Jerzy Bartmińskis. Jerzy Bartmiński was not given to dispersion. The *Słownik stereotypów i symboli ludowych*, published in Lublin, belongs to the Polish tradition. *Aspects of Cognitive Ethnolinguistics*, published by Equinox in London in 2009, belongs to the second international contribution to Slavic languages and International Ethnolinguistics. The EUROJOS volumes on *Home*, *Work*, and *Europe*, belong to the third phase, to the specific contribution that Polish and European scholars have made to the axiological interpretation of European values, their traditions, their mutations, and perhaps, even to their future development. And finally, for over thirty years now, the outstanding journal, *Etnolingwistyka*, has bound together the three strands of the Lublin School’s projects into one coherent ongoing project for philologists, lovers of

language and languages. Europe will find much to learn about its heritage in the publications of all three Jerzy Bartmińskis.

But Europe is not static. Europe is not a museum. Europe is constantly evolving. Without an enlightened patriotism and a shared cultural and political project, many European nations have sunk into a defensive and unenlightened nationalism that is rarely informed by historical and cultural analysis. In such a context, Jerzy Bartmiński's philology – his love of language and languages – comes like a breath of fresh air. And this makes Jerzy Bartmiński all the more outstanding, and all the more essential for us today. Who among us can claim to be both a patriot, as he obviously was, and a *citoyen du monde*, a man of the world, a world citizen? Jerzy Bartmiński was a man who devoted his entire life to trying to understand, define and celebrate the contribution that the family and village life, the city and the nation, can make to the rich fabric of Europe. I think we can all thank Jerzy Bartmiński for incarnating an ideal for ethnolinguistics and enlightened academic excellence. He was a fixed star in difficult times: a lighthouse that can help guide us through stormy waters as we collectively try, as both citizens and individuals, to navigate in our nations within "Our Europe".

When Irena Vaňková and I invited the great Humboldt scholar, Jürgen Trabant, from Berlin, to meet up with Jerzy Bartmiński and Stanisława Bartmińska at our conference in Prague in 2016, we asked the question: "What linguistics for Europe?". Jerzy Bartmiński had an answer to that question. He "lived" that answer. And I feel confident that his work will continue to help us understand what it means to live in language and to live in Europe, together.

Jerzy Bartmiński developed a methodology for each of the different phases of his career. The methodology for which the Lublin School became known was based on:

1. Dictionaries and encyclopaedias;
2. Textual analysis and corpus study;
3. Questionnaires with student respondents.

The Lublin and Polish scholars will continue to explore new resources, new corpora and new ways of organizing words and worldviews. They will inevitably adapt the methodology that emerged in the second and third phases of Jerzy Bartmiński's career to better understand the rich fabric of the Polish culture and language; because Jerzy Bartmiński's methodology has been criticized by some scholars. The questions remain unanswered, but they are stimulating debate. Should the questionnaires be maintained or replaced by online questionnaires or by the masses of information now

available from Internet sources? Should the questionnaires take in a larger, more representative segment of society? To what degree should the role of corpus study be reappraised in the light of thirty years of corpus linguistics? How should translation studies interact with cultural linguistics, ethnolinguistics, and linguistic anthropology? What place should be given to foreign literatures and translations that clearly help shape a language's culture? What role is contemporary world culture playing in reshaping Polish worldviews with online media? In the GOOGLEZEIT, when Netflix and YouTube are competing with national media, generating what some would argue are "online communities", how are we to understand the world, Europe, our nations and their cultures?

Methodology, new forms of publishing, and dialoguing will be part of this new phase that is increasingly being understood as Web 3.0. How will academics respond with books, videoconferences, and online workshops and conferences? Will Lublin go global, stay local, or experiment with "glocal" projects and publications? These are questions for us and for our times, not questions for Jerzy Bartmiński, who died a few months ago, before the end of the COVID pandemic, in the world before the invasion of Ukraine.

Nonetheless, in one sense, the spirit of Jerzy Bartmiński will accompany us with his drive and curiosity, his creativity and his critical thinking. Whether you look behind, or look forwards, I believe you will find something of Jerzy Bartmiński on the horizon. Few men are great enough to constantly question the foundations and objectives of their life's work. Jerzy Bartmiński excelled in drawing to him, and implicating a wide variety of personalities with different skills and perspectives. Perhaps one of the qualities of great men is that they shine like the moon, not like the sun. They enlighten others without encroaching on them or crushing them. People glow in their presence. They don't become dim or dull. All the stars in the sky shine next to the moon. Jerzy Bartmiński had a gift for discerning the inner beauty of people and he knew how to harness their potential and help them express it in his projects. In such communities, unity makes us more "us". And the project, not the ego shines, when we do things together.

For this reason, Jerzy Bartmiński was something of an oxymoron, a paradox, a prudent risk-taker. He welcomed creative, critical thinking and he embraced challenges as moments for redefining the fundamental principles and foundations of his projects. The Lublin School of Ethnolinguistics was – like all scientific projects – subjected to constant criticism and reappraisal, and Jerzy Bartmiński carefully cultivated a respectful but critical climate in which to address the potential and shortcomings of that methodology and approach. For that reason, the 2013 publication, *The Linguistic Worldview:*



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*Ethnolinguistics, Cognition, and Culture*, edited by Adam Głaz, David S. Danaher, and Przemysław Łozowski, is an important work, bringing together various critical reappraisals of the Lublin School of Ethnolinguistics' projects and publications.

Polish scholars will certainly go on to reappraise the work on the Lublin School's contribution to Polish poetics and ethnolinguistics. International scholars will continue to discuss what elements of its contribution to the field should be maintained, dropped or developed. And European scholars must react regarding the EUROJOS project, its methodology, aims, conclusions and ultimate objectives. After Brexit and the breaching of Ukraine's borders, Europe is in need – more than ever – of enlightened thinkers and engaged citizens. When he shone brightly, Jerzy Bartmiński incarnated the best of that French sensibility that is rooted in the country but open to the world. As a citizen of the world, *un citoyen du monde*, he never forgot his *pays*, his homeland, and his people. And for that reason his words and his worldview will continue to impress and invigorate us.

Rouen, Normandy, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2022

(based on a paper given at the University of Zadar, Croatia, June 2022)

