A R T Y K U Ł Y   I   R O Z P R A W Y

DARIUSZ BRZEZIŃSKI
Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences
University of Leeds, School of Sociology and Social Policy (visiting research fellow)

THE CULTURE OF DIALOGUE
IN A TIME OF GROWING NATIONALISM:
ON THE ENGAGED NATURE OF ZYGMUNT BAUMAN'S THOUGHT

INTRODUCTION

"There is no choice between 'engaged' and 'neutral' ways of doing sociology. A non-committal sociology is an impossibility" (Bauman 2000b: 216). These words, which Zygmunt Bauman wrote at the end of *Liquid Modernity*, are an excellent summing up of his own approach to sociological research. His analyses were always accompanied by both clear criticism of certain phenomena he described and an emphasis on the need to seek alternative solutions to them (Aidnik, Hviid Jacobsen 2017: 136–162; Dawson 2017: 224–242). A combination of the denotative and conative functions of his discourse (Jakobson 1960) took various and sometimes polar opposite forms. At one end of the spectrum, there was his explicit espousal of certain ideas and concepts (Bauman 1978, 1993, 1998). At the other, there was his attachment to the model of "iconoclastic utopia" (Jacoby 2005), characterised by relativization of the *status quo* and a stress on the need to create alternatives (Bauman 1976a, 2004b, 2017b). One of the ways he sought a balance between these two forms of engaged scholarship was in his emphasis on the sphere of dialogue (Bauman 1978, 1987, 2004a, 2017b). Through the decades, in referring to various theoret-

Correspondence address: dbrzezinski@ifispan.edu.pl; ORCID: 0000-0002-9978-9333

ical inspirations—from the writings of Jürgen Habermas to the encyclicals of Pope Francis—he tried to insist on the necessity of joint work toward looking for the best solutions for social problems. That issue was also very strongly accented in his last works (Bauman 2016, 2017b), in which, in addition to the many other challenges of the liquid-modern world, he pointed to the imperative to oppose growing nationalism (Bauman 2017b, 2017c: 31–45, 2016).

In this article I analyse Bauman's concept of dialogue as a potential remedy for problems arising as a consequence of the turn toward "strong identities." I take into account the broader context both of his writings and of critical discourses in the social sciences. The text is divided into three parts. In the first, I situate Bauman's proposals concerning the relation between 'is' and 'ought' on the map of engaged anthropology. The next part is devoted to an analysis of how the concept of dialogue evolved in his work and of his inspirations in this respect. In the last part, I point to the opportunities and limitations of his vision of a "culture of dialogue" in contemporary condition influenced by "retrotopic" tendencies (Bauman 2017b). Throughout the text I reflect on the complicated relations between studying cultural reality and striving to change it.

BAUMAN'S WORK
FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ENGAGED ANTHROPOLOGY

Reflecting on the state and future of social anthropology at the end of the twentieth century, Raymond Firth (1992: 208–223) expressed the conviction that engagement would have ever greater importance. He wrote in this context about anthropologists' sense of shared responsibility for the condition of the communities they study. He stated that it is natural and understandable that the anthropologists will seek both to illuminate those communities' problems and to help counteract them. [1] Furthermore, he considered the knowledge produced by "applied anthropology" to be a legitimate science that could pave the way for innovative theoretical diagnoses. In considering these conclusions almost three decades after they were written, it can be said that they have largely proven prophetic. Although engaged research is far from receiving universal acceptance, the growing interest of anthropologists in its various forms is clearly visible (Borofsky, De Lauri 2019: 3–19; Kirsch 2018; Hedican 2016; Beck, Maida

[1] Firth pointed out that although he was a supporter of the analytical approach, he was also involved in the activities of various agencies aimed at improving living conditions.

2013). This interest is expressed in frequent analyses of specific social problems as well as in general reflections on the challenges of modern times and possible ways to address them. At the same time, there is an ongoing discussion in anthropological circles about the proper relationship between accumulating knowledge about communities and acting to improve their condition.

In regard to this last issue, I will briefly characterize some of its most important currents and then compare them with the engaged nature of Zygmunt Bauman's work. The first of these orientations, which has by far the longest history, is applied anthropology (van Willigen 2002). As far as this approach is concerned, research is supposed to the resolution of specific problems by diagnosing them, looking for a suitable remedy, and then contributing to its implementation. The anthropologist may cooperate in this respect with public or non-governmental institutions, try to influence them, or take appropriate steps himself.[2] Although the nature of applied anthropology's impact on social reality can take diverse forms, it usually aims to implement a previously developed strategy. This "linear-temporal" approach differentiates applied anthropology from anthropology in action (Rubinstein: 2018: 1–7).[3] In the latter case, efforts to bring about change should be "circular-participative" in manner (Bennett 1996: 38). Scholars do not strive to outline the problem on their own and to find a solution; rather, they participate with members of the community in searching for remedies by collectively reflecting on the relevant issues. Therefore, both diagnosis and proposed changes are developed *in statu nascendi*, and dialogue plays a fundamental role in this respect. The latter category is also of special importance for public anthropology, whose main assumptions were formulated at the end of the last century by Robert Borofsky (Borofsky 2000: 9, 10; Borofsky, De Lauri 2019: 3–19).[4] Scholars representing this orientation act as mediators between the academic community and a wider audience. They conduct analyses of social problems in a way that

---

[2] John van Willigen (2002: 3) wrote that "The number of anthropologists employed to solve practical problems has increased dramatically. Rather than working in the traditional academic roles of teaching and research in a college or university, large numbers of anthropologists work for many other kinds of organizations such as government agencies, non-government agencies, and firms in a wide range of content areas."

[3] It is worth remembering that this kind of engaged research began in the middle of the last century with Sol Tax's study of the community in the Fox reserve in Iowa (Tax 1958: 17–22; see Foley 1999: 171–199).

[4] The first issue of the journal *Public Anthropology*, which is devoted to popularizing this form of engaged research and the presentation of its achievements, was published in 2019.

allows discussions about them to acquire a public dimension. Therefore, they speak a non-esoteric language and try to stimulate debate on social challenges, while usually also taking part in the debates themselves. In doing so, they are convinced that the principal effect of their actions will be not the development of ultimate solutions but rather the involvement of community members in the endless process of transforming their life-world. Finally—last but not least—the current of cultural criticism should be distinguished (Marcus, Fischer 1986: 111–136). Although such criticism may take very different forms, their common denominator is relativization of existing reality, usually by revealing power relations behind certain processes. In addition, alternatives to existing institutional, structural, or axiological solutions may be outlined and encouraged.

In Zygmunt Bauman's work—in which making a distinction between his sociological, anthropological, philosophical, and cultural reflections would be pointless (Bauman, Tester 2001: 40)—elements of all the above-mentioned ways of influencing reality can be distinguished. In connection with the first, it is worth highlighting examples of specific solutions he proposed as a result of his analysis of social problems. For example, toward the end of the last century his reflections on poverty led him to emphasize the need for fundamental changes in social policy. These would consist in separating individual income from earning ability[5] and considering activities that have remained outside the labour market within the scope of social benefits (Bauman 1998). Moreover, his conviction that completely new political instruments with a transnational dimension should be created was based on his analysis of the negative consequences of globalization, including growing social stratification and the independence of capital from local communities (Bauman 2008; 2004a). The "circular-participative" method of operating, which is characteristic of anthropology in action, can be seen in his numerous efforts to expand civic engagement and the scope of responsibility for the state of the modern world. This was reflected in his exposure of social problems—often using a rhetorical strategy based on hyperbole—and arguing for community efforts to counteract them. The solutions he proposed were usually limited to very general frameworks which were supposed to be filled in on the basis of an agreement reached through dialogue (Bauman 2017b, 1999). On the other hand, such a strategy was possible thanks to his assumption of the role of public intellectual. Most of his writings—especially those from

---

[5] Bauman based his thinking in this respect on the concept proposed by Claus Offe (1996).

his last quarter century—were primarily addressed to a wide audience. In order to reach the largest possible number of recipients, Bauman used all kinds of communication channels: from essays written for the daily newspapers, through interviews given to journalists around the world, to blogs on social media. Due to his constant pointing to the difficulties and challenges faced by the contemporary world, the convergence of his approach with the vision of anthropology as cultural criticism can be noted as well. Moreover, for many years he set new paths for its development, writing critically about consumerist culture (Bauman 2007), individualization (Bauman 2000b), modern ethics and its contemporary changes (Bauman 1993) etc.

In my opinion, the term that most fully reflects the multidimensionality of the engaged nature of Zygmunt Bauman's thought is "utopian thinking" (Aidnik, Jacobsen 2017: 136–162; Jacobsen 2008: 209–230). Due to the wide semantic scope of this category, I would like to point out that I define it in accordance with the way Bauman himself characterized it for most of his sociological work.[6] He understood utopian thinking as the combination of criticism towards existing condition with development of both alternative ideas and actions aimed at their implementation (Bauman 1976a; see Jacobson 2007: 217–240). In relation to this concept Bauman was combining an analysis of social reality with an attempt to influence its change. He was emphasising what a significant distance separates is "from ought" and highlighting individual and community responsibility for aiming at connecting them. It should be emphasized that with the exception of his earliest works he not only thought that uniting them fully was not possible but he also ceased to give details of the conditions he postulated. In reference to the work of Russell Jacoby (2005), he called this approach to the future and attempts to influence it "iconoclastic". He stated:

> "[…] I propose to unpack the concept of 'iconoclastic utopia' as a focusing (as in all utopias) on a critical revision of the ways and means of the present life as the main factor in an uncovering of the otherwise suppressed and

---

[6] In the 1970s, in the book *Socialism: The Active Utopia*, Bauman clearly argued that he was against identifying utopia with pipe dreams or impossible ideals. He wrote that "Utopias share with the totality of culture the quality—to paraphrase Santayana—of a knife with the edge pressed against the future. They constantly cause the reaction of the future with the present, and thereby produce the compound known as human history" (Bauman 1976a: 12). Bauman considered utopian thinking as an exceptionally important element of social change, opening the way to transformations and giving them direction. In the following years, based on this same approach to reality, he drew conclusions as to the need to make essential changes in various spheres of social life, from interpersonal relations (Bauman 1993) to the instruments of international politics (Bauman 2004a).

concealed, and hitherto unknown, possibility of an 'else-where', of another 'social reality.' […] The principal stake of iconoclastic utopianism is the possibility of an alternative social reality, not its precise design" (Bauman, Rovirosa-Madrazo 2010: 51).

The iconoclastic nature of Bauman's utopian thinking was closely related to his non-finalistic, processual vision of change. In his opinion, the direction of change should constantly be adapted to current conditions, while a key role in determining that direction was to be played by an agreement achieved through dialogue (Bauman 1999; 1976b). I will elaborate on this issue in the next part of the text.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE IDEA OF DIALOGUE IN BAUMAN'S WORKS

Searching for the sources of the idea of dialogue in Bauman's engaged sociology, it is necessary to go back to the turn of the 1950s to 1960s, when he fundamentally re-evaluated his approach to Marxism. His growing disappointment with the social reality at the time, along with his loss of confidence in the Polish United Workers' Party (Bauman 1962a: 50–64, 1962b: 77–90), led him to believe that he needed to make a fundamental reassessment of the possibility of achieving socialist goals. He abandoned Leninism in favour of revisionism, and a special role in this respect was played by his fascination with the works of Antonio Gramsci (Gramsci 1971; Brzeziński 2017: 61).[7] This change was accompanied by the transformation of his thinking on what form the engaged thought should take. Bauman replaced his strategy of supporting party policy with one giving more value to actions undertaken by the community. He began to think that it is thanks to the community that specific solutions would be developed and then implemented (Bauman 1967: 399–415, 1966: 145–162). The role of the intellectual would be to support this process and to make sure that it contributed to increasing the spheres of human freedom. In commenting on his changed view of engaged thinking, Bauman concluded at the beginning of the twenty-first century that

"[…] on the door through which I once believed social reflection to be able and destined to enter social reality I would rather hang today the 'entry

---

[7] Around four decades later Bauman referred to that change in the following words: "In a paradoxical way Gramsci saved me from turning into an anti-Marxist, as so many other disenchanted thinkers did, throwing out on their way everything that was, and remained, precious and topical in Marx's legacy. I read tidings in Gramsci's *Prison Notebook*: there was a way of saving the ethical core, and the analytical potential I saw no reason to discard from the stiff carapace in which it has been enclosed and stifled" (Bauman, Tester 2001: 26).

prohibited' sign, regretting that it has not been done before. […] And so the dialogue with the experiences of free men and women is the only door which can be used. That does not mean that it will be used; a lot of effort is needed to open it and keep it open" (Bauman, Tester 2001: 157).

In the following years, Bauman continued to reflect on the subject of a community-based method of developing and implementing solutions that would replace the existing institutional, structural, and axiological condition. He devoted considerable space in his works to the question of dialogue, including in *Towards the Critical Sociology* (1976b) and *Hermeneutics and Social Sciences* (1978). In both books he clearly stated that although the role of critically oriented intellectual is to oppose the status quo and inspire hope for change, it is not for them to present specific proposals or projects. Decisions in the matter should be made collectively, and the intellectual's actions should consist in creating an institutional framework that would allow such methods. In this respect, Bauman was inspired by Jürgen Habermas' theory of communicative actions (Habermas 1981). He considered that the openness on all sides of an interaction and the equality characterizing all speech acts—which were assumed in the theory—would allow the development of solutions based on fully rational premises. Common sense knowledge, considered one of the major obstacles to social change, would also be overcome in this way. At the same time, it should be emphasized, he remained fully convinced that it would be a daunting task to attempt to implement Habermas's theoretical construct comprehensively. Nevertheless, in accord with the premises of his utopian thought—which he elaborated around the same time (Bauman 1976a)—he believed that the concept should be treated as an "idealized horizon" to work toward. And although his interest in the vision of perfect communication did not last long, the idea of agreement based on dialogue remained a constitutive aspect of his thought.

Another book in which Bauman explained his view of dialogue was the work *Legislators and Interpreters* (1987). Its postulates regarding the role of intellectuals constituted an expansion of his earlier criticism of blueprint utopian thinking (Jacoby 2005). These thoughts were supplemented by an analysis of the tragic consequences of constructing and implementing disciplinary discourses within the condition of modernity, as well as observations regarding their incompatibility with the condition at the end of the twentieth century. According to Bauman, in a pluralistic, individualized, and also dynamically changing world, the intellectual should change from being a "legislator" into being an "interpreter" who would deepen understanding between people with different ways of seeing the world, while

simultaneously supporting intercultural dialogue. The interpreter's role would not stop there, though. The fact that new challenges are emerging in the post-modern world—such as the mercantilization of social life, or difficulties in achieving community goals—implies a continual need to relativize the prevailing conditions and to encourage people to act to change them. Dialogue should play a fundamental role in this regard:

> "The legitimation of the social system must again be made a matter of public debate; once it happens, the pressure upon the social system to legitimize itself in terms of person-oriented values rather that achievements of commodification, in terms of practical rather than instrumental reason, will necessarily follow; and thus conditions for emancipation, promised by the project of modernity, will be created" (Bauman 1987: 191).

During all the later years of his work, Bauman argued on the one hand for the need to undertake such a dialogue, while on the other he pointed to the numerous difficulties associated with it (Bauman 2008, 2004a, 1999). For example, in his book *In Search of Politics* (1999), published at the end of the last century, he focused on the issue of the ever-decreasing separation between the private and public spheres. He stated that this situation —which he described as "the disappearance of the agora"—significantly blocks citizens from discussing important social problems, while also hindering the formulation of appropriate political solutions. Therefore, he argued that the existing democratic institutions require far-reaching transformation in order to be able to perform fully their assigned functions. In accord with the premises of utopian thinking of an iconoclastic nature, Bauman did not outline what form those institutions should take.[8] Both then and later he participated in numerous debates devoted to the issue, and at the same time, by being active in various forums, he tried to persuade the widest circles of the population to reflect on the subject as well. It could be said that he thus implemented the premises of anthropology in action and of public anthropology.

Another example of Bauman's development of the concept of dialogue was the book *Europe: An Unfinished Adventure* (Bauman 2004a). In this work, Bauman argued that it was necessary to seek new political tools on the international level as a counterweight to the unrestricted movement of capital.[9] He positively assessed the efforts made in this matter as part

---

[8] For criticism of such an approach, see, for example: Carleheden 2008: 174–192; Campain 2008: 193–208.

[9] This is a subject that Bauman addressed in his earlier publications as well, for instance, in the books *Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World* (2001) and *Society under Siege* (2002).

of progressing European integration. He emphasized that these attempts were characterized by respect for cultural differences and critical reflection on the history of mutual relations between nations. He considered that the dialogue-based methods of acting developed within EU structures could be not only a remedy for the civilizational challenges of the old continent, but also a good model for unifying states on a larger scale. [10]

The moderate optimism that Bauman displayed at the beginning of the century in regard to this question definitely weakened in subsequent years (Bauman 2016, 2011). An analysis of the challenges that world had to face in the twenty-first century led him to conclude that the direction in which the global condition was heading was the opposite of the one he had himself postulated. He devoted considerable attention to this issue, including in regard to the financial crisis at the end of the 2000s (Bauman, Rovirosa-Madrazo 2010). He pointed out that one of its consequences was ongoing change in attitudes toward immigrants, as part of a wider process of closing social systems to cultural difference. What is more, in his reflections on the terrorist threat, he emphasized that the fear produced by it undergoes a kind of generalization and comes to be focused on all "otherness." He argued that the fear was being magnified by security policy, which certain governments were using instrumentally in order to reinforce their legitimacy (Bauman 2002). In his last works, Bauman analyzed the origin, course, and effects of the migration crisis that broke out in the mid-2010s. He focused in particular on the increasing fear of any "otherness" as well as on subsequent stages in the process of sealing physical and cultural borders (Bauman 2017b, 2016). However, all these phenomena did not weaken his efforts to promote the idea of agreement based on dialogue. By highlighting these phenomena, he also argued that there was an increasing need to counter the growing threats to cultural pluralism. I will examine this issue in the next part of the text.

THE CULTURE OF DIALOGUE IN THE FACE OF GROWING NATIONALISM

The social condition that Bauman sketched in his last works differed in several important respects from his earlier analyses of the postmodern world. First, while he had previously focused his analyses primarily on the issue of freedom—variously assessing the consequences of its exceptional proliferation—over time, he began to focus more and more on the

---

[10] Bauman referred in this context to the concept of the "allgemeine Vereinigung der Menschheit," which Immanuel Kant had presented in *Perpetual Peace* (1983).

question of security (Bauman 2017b, 2016). This change in interest resulted from the above-mentioned increasing sense of insecurity, which was characterized among other things by a growing acceptance for the use of various measures of control. Second, he analyzed the process of increasing support for the conviction that the multicultural model of society should be modified to some extent, or at least that it should be subject to discussion. He raised this issue many times in his works in the 2010s (Bauman 2016, 2014, 2011), and at the very end of his life he illustrated it by referring to the referendum won by supporters of Brexit in Great Britain and to Donald Trump's victory in the US presidential election in 2016 (Bauman 2017a: 31–45). Third, although since the 1980s Bauman had continuously recognized the culture of individualism as one of the foundations of the liquid modern world (Bauman, Raud 2015), over time he also started to focus ever more attention on processes related to the strengthening of collective identity. In this respect, he analysed the growing role of nationalism in the twenty-first century (Bauman 2016).

In his last book, *Retrotopy* (2017b), Bauman analyzed all the above phenomena—which are closely related to one another—in the context of the broader process of a nostalgic turn.[11] He interpreted them as counter-reactions to fears related to the growing complexity, uncertainty, and variability of the liquid-modern condition. He described the genesis of the problem in the following words: "The road to future turns looks uncannily as a trail of corruption and degeneration. Perhaps the road back, to the past, won't miss the chance of turning into a trail of cleansing from the damages committed by futures, whenever they turned into a present?" (Bauman 2017b: 6).[12] Therefore, within the framework of utopian thinking of a retrospective nature, the restitution of the old conditions is perceived as a way to deal with the latest civilizational challenges: an intensification of nationalism is supposed to be the remedy for the difficulties that emerge in a cosmopolitan society; a strong leader is supposed to be the answer to problems arising from the increased blurring of responsibility in a global world; and returning to stricter cultural

---

[11] On the subject of the nostalgic turn, see: Angé, Berliner 2016; Reynolds 2011; Boym 2001.

[12] Bauman depicted this process by reference to Paul Klee's painting *Angelus Novus,* which he reinterpreted in light of an earlier analysis by Walter Benjamin (Benjamin 1969: 249). Like the author of *The Arcades Project,* he claimed that the painting presents the fearful angel of history, but he saw a different source for the angel's fright. While for Benjamin it came from the past, marked by war, Bauman stated that it derived from an uncertain, full of threats future.

boundaries is supposed to be the cure for problems related to grow-
ing cultural pluralism. Bauman pointed out that all the aforementioned
fears are subject to petrification due to the activities of pragmatic politi-
cians. He claimed that they were using these fears in order to build
their political strategies on a critique of cultural pluralism while simul-
taneously reinforcing strong national identities (Bauman 2017b, 2017:
31–45, 2016).

In the above-mentioned analyses, Bauman referred to the diagnoses
of Svetlana Boym (Boym 2001; Bauman 2017b). At the beginning of the
century, Boym made a distinction between "reflective" and "restorative"
nostalgia. In defining the first of these, she emphasized the category of
álgos, showing that this way of referring to the past is based primarily
on the experience of longing and not on a desire to recreate that past.
Bauman, however, was much more inspired by the idea of the second of
these types, characterised by the accent on *nóstos*. According to Boym, res-
torative nostalgia is distinguished by orthodoxy in approaching the past,
and at the same time by striving for its reconstruction, which is reflec-
ted, among other things, in the rise of nationalist sentiments. She wrote
that "This kind of nostalgia characterizes national and nationalistic rev-
ivals all over the world, which engage in the anti-modern myth-making of
history by means of a return to national symbols and myths and, occasio-
nally, through swapping conspiracy theories" (Boym 2001: 41). It should
be emphasized, however, that although Bauman shared Boym's belief in
the genesis of the contemporary proliferation of the experience of nos-
talgia—especially in its restorative dimension—his attitude to this trend
remained to some degree different. Boym portrayed various, complex, and
often contradictory functions of this attitude. Bauman, on the other hand,
in accord with his premises of engaged thought, emphasized only the neg-
ative consequences of the spread of retrotopic tendencies. Nor did he stop
there. He pointed to the need to counter these tendencies with completely
different attitudes, which he described in reference to his earlier reflec-
tions on the culture of dialogue.

One of the elements of Bauman's criticism of retrotopically oriented
politics was that it is connected with a return to the excluding and discrim-
inating strategies toward the Other that appeared in "solid" modernity
(Bauman 2016, 1991). In the context of the above-mentioned crises of
the Western world in the twenty-first century, including in particular mi-
gration panic, he referred to the mechanism of adiaphorization legitimated
by the security discourse. In his opinion, immigrants and refugees are in-
creasingly being excluded from the sphere of moral obligations, and often

also placed outside the sphere of human compassion. [13] Moreover, they become the object of generalized accusations, whether of terrorism or of being a threat to public health and order [14] (Bauman 2016). In analyzing these processes, Bauman referred to the work of Giorgio Agamben regarding the condition of *homo sacer*, which the Italian philosopher described as follows:

> "What defines the status of *homo sacer* is therefore not [that] […] the originary ambivalence of the sacredness is assumed to belong to him, but rather both the particular character of the double exclusion into which he is taken, and the violence to which he finds himself exposed" (Agamben 1998: 82).

Bauman repeated after Agamben that security policy leads to the return within democratic societies of elements of the ideology and practices of totalitarian systems.

In his books (Bauman 2017b, 2016), as well as in his press articles (Bauman 2017a) and public speeches devoted to these issues, Bauman appealed to his audience not to succumb to exclusionary and violent discourses. He criticized their premises and pointed to their tragic consequences in the past. At the same time, he clearly articulated his belief in the need to act for cultural pluralism. He wrote that

> "The mechanism for singling out the culprits of victimization appears flawless and unbeatable. It could indeed be so, were it not for the presence of a counterforce: of the phenomenon of encounter, leading to a dialogue that aims if not at an unconditional agreement, then surely at mutual understanding" (Bauman 2016: 112).

In expanding on these claims, Bauman outlined—in the spirit of utopian thinking with an iconoclastic dimension—a vision of a "culture of

---

[13] Bauman wrote of adiaphorization—that is, the exclusion of certain actions or the entities toward which they are directed from the sphere of moral reflection—in the context of the constitutive traits both solid and liquid modernity premises of adiaphorization. Although the genesis of the attitude is different in the two cases, the consequences of its appearance are very similar. He wrote that "[…] late modern (or 'liquid modern' […]) 'adiaphorisation mark two' works through *dis*engagement and self-distantiation, in sharp distinction from the past, bureaucratic form, which presumed tight engagement as the condition of ubiquitous surveillance, regular monitoring, normative regulation and routine coercion. The results, though, are pretty much similar: growing chunks of human interaction are 'ethically defused' —exempt from moral evaluation and emancipated from insidious monitoring and corrective impact of moral conscience" (Bauman 2000a: 95). According to Bauman, in the retrotopic order both solid and liquid modernity premises of adiaphorization are superimposed on one another and at the same time undergo petrification.

[14] For Bauman, Viktor Orbán's statement that "All the terrorists are migrants," was emblematic in this respect.

dialogue" which would be founded on a systematic expansion of open-ness, understanding, and respect for different worldviews. The cosmopolitan consciousness that would result from this process should be the foundation for shaping intercultural relationships and undertaking community actions. Contrary to Bauman's earlier reflections on dialogue, which I analyzed in the second part of this article, in this case he neither attempted to display how this process would occur nor to indicate a specific group that would lead it. In referring to the teachings of Pope Francis —who became one of his most important authority figures at the end of his life—he argued the responsibility for shaping the "fusion of horizons" should rest on all members of contemporary society. "The intention behind Pope Francis' message," Bauman claimed (2017b: 165), "is to bring the fate of peaceful cohabitation, solidarity, and collaborations between humans from the fuzzy and obscure realm of high politics 'as seen on TV' down to the street, workshops, offices, schools and public spaces where we, the rank-and-file *hoi polloi*, meet and converse […]."

However, Bauman's focus on the sphere of everyday life did not mean that he ceased to highlight the need to take political action. He clearly argued that the intensification of nationalist tendencies was not a step toward solving the important problems of the globalized world (Bauman 2017b, 2011, 2008). He believed that striving to seal cultural boundaries and re-value strong identities, which reflects a retrotopic mentality, is not the right answer to the difficulties of the contemporary condition. As in his analyses from the beginning of the century, he also argued in his last works that political tools must be sought that would limit the unrestricted flow of capital and would also make it possible to react properly to civilization challenges connected with the spread of international crime or terrorism. In this respect, he changed the sense of the "There is no alternative" slogan. At the end of *Retrotopy* he stated that

> „[…] in this one case—in opposition to the cases to which Margaret Thatcher used to impute it—the verdict 'there is no alternative' will hold fast, with no likelihood of appeal. More than any other time, we—human inhabitants of the Earth—are in the either/or situation: we face joining either hands, or common graves" (Bauman 2017b: 167).

As in the case of creating a "fusion of horizons" discursive strategies were supposed to play a fundamental role in seeking new political solutions. The "culture of dialogue" promoted by Bauman was to be reflected in a readiness to listen to all parties, an openness to new strategies, as well as—or perhaps above all—a sense of responsibility for humankind's common fate in a globalized world.

In assessing this aspect of Bauman's engaged thinking, it should be emphasized that his position and recognition in the non-academic world allowed him to reach the widest possible range of people with his message. Both his criticism of the contemporary condition and his proposals for shaping a "culture of dialogue" have gone far beyond intellectual circles to become a subject of public discourse. This is valuable in itself, but it is also significant in relation to the fact that Bauman made the success of the transformations he promoted conditional on the community's participation in them. In my opinion, his interpretation of intensifying nationalist tendencies as a desire to return to a mythologically conceived past is also vey convincing. The juxtaposition of retrotopic tendencies with the essence of global challenges has strengthened his arguments regarding the ineffective nature of the former and the need to search for innovative solutions for the latter. On the other hand, it is impossible not to notice that in his criticism of the nostalgic turn he used—as quite often in his diagnoses—a rhetorical strategy based on hyperbole, expressing himself with unequivocal negativeness about all its forms. In regard to his vision of a "culture of dialogue it is first worth appreciating the universality of its premises. The culture of dialogue was supposed to pave the way for mutual understanding and to develop adequate solutions both in the sphere of interpersonal and intercultural relations. However, the considerable generality, if not enigmatism, of this concept—due to the fact that it is an exemplification of utopian thinking of an iconoclastic nature —can also be seen as its weakness. Bauman did not at all specify how its premises could be implemented. He also did not seek to formulate principles from which systemic solutions could be developed. Nevertheless, he effectively argued that the concept needed to be systematically propagated. Keith Tester and Michael Hviid Jacobsen were right (2005: 34) when they wrote that "(…) Bauman can be regarded as a utopian of hope, who through his sociological practice with its morally committed core wishes to activate people and show them the possibilities and alternatives available to them."

CONCLUSIONS

The passage of *Liquid Modernity* cited in the introduction to this paper is followed by the words: "Sociologists may deny or forget the 'world-view' effects of their work, and the impact of that view on human singular or joint actions, only at the expense of forfeiting that responsibility of choice which every other human being faces daily. The job of sociology is to see

to it that choices are genuinely free, and that they remain so, increasingly so, for the duration of humanity" (Bauman 2000b: 216). From his earliest works to the diagnoses that he wrote just before his death, Bauman recognized sociology as much as a tool for influencing reality as for describing it. Although he adopted very different strategies in this respect—which I have compared with the approaches of engaged anthropology—all of them were in line with utopian thought. The attempt to relativize the *status quo* co-existed in his works with an emphasis on the need to look for alternatives and to act to implement them. This was also the nature of the idea of dialogue which he was developing over several decades and which evolved from a hermeneutically oriented approach to develop solutions, through a post-modern strategy of deepening understanding between different worldviews, to a proposal for how new policy tools should be created. He returned to this idea in his last works as well and it became the foundation for his testamentary concept of a "culture of dialogue". He considered it as a key to develop openness and mutual understanding, both in interpersonal relations and in global politics. Although this vision is not free from weaknesses, it is an extremely important element of the discourse on strengthening cultural pluralism in the era of growing nationalism.

REFERENCES

Aidnik, Martin, Michael Hviid Jacobsen. 2017. "Not Yet: Probing the Potentials and Problems in the Utopian Understanding of Ernst Bloch and Zygmunt Bauman." In: Michael Hviid Jacobsen (ed.). *Beyond Bauman: Critical Engagement and Creative Excursions*. London–New York: Routledge: 136–162.

Angé, Olivia, David Berliner. 2016. *Anthropology and Nostalgia*. New York–Oxford: Berghahn.

Agamben, Giorgio. 1998. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Transl. Daniel Heller--Roazen. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 1962a. "Social Structure of the Party Organization in Industrial Works." *The Polish Sociological Bulletin* 3–4: 50–64.

Bauman, Zygmunt, 1962b, "Values and Standards of Success of the Warsaw Youth." *The Polish Sociological Bulletin* 1–2: 77–90.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 1966. "The Limitations of Perfect Planning." *Co-existence* 2: 145–162.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 1967. "Modern Times, Modern Marxism." *Social Research* 34(3): 399–415.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 1976a. *Socialism: The Active Utopia*. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 1976b. *Towards a Critical Sociology: An Essay on Common-Sense and Emancipation*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 1978. *Hermeneutics and Social Science: Approaches to Understanding*. London: Hutchinson.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 1987. *Legislators and Interpreters: On Modernity, Postmodernity and Intellectuals*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 1991. *Modernity and Ambivalence*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 1993. *Postmodern Ethics*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 1998. *Work, Consumerism and the New Poor*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 1999. *In Search of Politics*. Cambridge: Polity.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2000a. "Ethics of Individuals." *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 25(1): 83–96.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2000b. *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2002. *Society under Siege*. Cambridge: Polity.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2004a. *Europe: An Unfinished Adventure*. Cambridge: Polity.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2004b. *Wasted Lives: Modernity and its Outcasts*. Cambridge: Polity.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2007. *Consuming Life*. Cambridge: Polity.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2008. *Does Ethics Have a Chance in a World of Consumers?* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2011. *Collateral Damage: Social Inequalities in a Global Age*. Cambridge: Polity.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2016. *Strangers at our Door*. Cambridge: Polity.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2017a. *A Chronicle of Crisis, 2011–16*. London: Social Europe Edition.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2017b. *Retrotopia*. Cambridge: Polity.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2017c. "Some of the Foremost Challenges to the Status Quo." *Studia Socjologiczno-Polityczne. Seria Nowa* 2: 31–46.

Bauman, Zygmunt, Rein Raud. 2015. *Practices of Selfhood*. Cambridge: Polity.

Bauman, Zygmunt, Citlali Rovirisa-Madrazo. 2010. *Living on Borrowed Time: Conversations with Citlali Rovirosa-Madrazo*. Cambridge: Polity.

Bauman, Zygmunt, Keith Tester. 2001. *Conversations with Zygmunt Bauman*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Beck, Sam, Carl A. Maida (ed.). 2013. *Toward Engaged Anthropology*. New York–Oxford: Berghahn.

Benjamin, Walter, 1969. *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*. New York: Schocken Books.

Bennett, John W. 1996. "Applied and Action Anthropology: Ideological, and Conceptual Aspects." *Current Anthropology* 36: 22–53.

Borofsky, Robert. 2000. "Public Anthropology. Where to? What Next?" *Anthropology News* 5: 9–10.

Borofsky, Robert, Antonio De Lauri. 2019. "Public Anthropology in Changing Times." *Public Anthropologist* 2: 3–19.

Boym, Svetlana. 2001. *The Future of Utopia*. New York: Basic Books.

Brzeziński, Dariusz. 2017. "Human Praxis, Alternative Thinking and Heterogeneous Culture —Zygmunt Bauman's Revisionist Thought." *Hybris* 2: 61–80.

Dawson, Matt. 2017. "Keeping Other Options Alive: Zygmunt Bauman, Hermeneutics and Sociological Alternatives." In: Michael Hviid Jacobsen (ed.). *Beyond Bauman. Critical Engagement and Creative Excursions*. London–New York: Routledge: 224––242.

Elliott, Anthony. 2007. "The Theory of Liquid Modernity: A Critique of Bauman's Recent Sociology." In: Anthony Elliott (ed.). *The Contemporary Bauman*. London–New York: Routledge.

Firth, Raymond. 1992. "A Future for Social Anthropology." In: Sandra Wallman (ed.). *Contemporary Futures*. London–New York: Routledge: 208–223.

Foley, Douglas E. 1999. "The Fox Project: A Reappraisal." *Current Anthropology* 40(2): 171––191.

Gramsci, Antonio. 1971. *Selected from the Prison Notebooks*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Habermas, Jürgen. 1981. *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1–2. Boston: Beacon Press.

Hedican, Edward J. 2016. *Public Anthropology. Engaging Social Issues in the Modern World*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Jacobsen, Michael Hviid. 2007. "Solid Modernity, Liquid Utopia — Liquid Modernity, Solid Utopia: Ubiquitous Utopianism as a Trademark of the Work of Zygmunt Bauman." In: Anthony Elliott (ed.). *The Contemporary Bauman*. Abingdon–New York: Routledge: 217––240.

Jacobsen, Michael Hviid. 2008. "Bauman on Utopia—Welcome to the Hunting Zone." In: Michael Hviid Jacobsen, Poul Poder (ed.). *The Sociology of Zygmunt Bauman. Challenges and Critique*. Aldershot: Ashgate: 209–230.

Jacoby, Russel. 2005. *Picture Imperfect: Utopian Thought for an Anti-Utopian Age*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Jakobson, Roman. 1960. "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics." In: Thomas A. Sebeok (ed.). *Style in Language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press: 350–377.

Kant, Immanuel. 2016. *Perpetual Piece and Other Essays on Politics, History and Morals*. Indianapolis–Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company.

Kilminster, Richard. 2017. "Overcritique and Ambiguity in Zygmunt Bauman's Sociology: A Long-term Perspective." In: Michael Hviid Jacobsen (red.). *Beyond Bauman: Critical Engagements and Creative Excursions*. London–New York: Routledge: 201–223.

Kirsch, Stuart. 2018. *Engaged Anthropology. Politics beyond the Text*. Oakland CA: University of California Press.

Marcus, George E., Michael M. J. Fischer. 1986. *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Offe, Claus. 1996. *Modernity and the State: East, West*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Reynolds, Simon. 2010. *Retromania: Pop Culture's Addiction to Its Own Past*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Rubinstein, Robert A. 2018. "Action Anthropology". w: Hilary Callan (ed). *The International Encyclopedia of Anthropology*. New York: John Wiley & Sons: 1–7.

Tax, Sol. 1958. "The Fox Project." *Human Organization* 17(1): 17–22.

van Willigen, John. 2002. *Applied Anthropology: An Introduction*. Westport CT: Bergin & Garvey.

Abstract

This article contains an analysis of the engaged nature of Zygmunt Bauman's writings, with particular emphasis on his last works. It focuses on his critical analysis of the rise of nationalism and his alternative vision of a "culture of dialogue." The text is divided into three parts. The first contrasts Bauman's fusion of the denotative and conative functions of language with different strategies of engaged anthropology. The next addresses Bauman's evolving idea of dialogue as a way of deepening understanding between different ways of seeing the world and of working out solutions to social problems. The last part considers Bauman's idea of developing responsibility for the contemporary condition based on a desire to

increase mutual understanding and cooperation (the "culture of dialogue"). The text attempts to assess this strategy of resistance against the contemporary rise of nationalism.

KULTURA DIALOGU W DOBIE NACJONALISTYCZNEGO WZMOŻENIA:
WOKÓŁ ZAANGAŻOWANEGO CHARAKTERU MYŚLI
ZYGMUNTA BAUMANA

Dariusz Brzeziński
(Instytut Filozofii i Socjologii PAN, University of Leeds)

Abstrakt

Artykuł poświęcony jest analizie zaangażowanego charakteru twórczości Zygmunta Baumana, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem jego ostatnich prac, skoncentrowanych na krytycznej analizie nacjonalistycznego wzmożenia oraz kreśleniu alternatywnej dla tego procesu wizji „kultury dialogu". Tekst został podzielony na trzy części. W pierwszej realizowane przez autora *Płynnej nowoczesności* zespalanie denotatywnej i konatywnej funkcji języka zostało skonfrontowane ze strategiami podejmowanymi w ramach antropologii zaangażowanej. Kolejna poświęcona jest analizie ewolucji wizji dialogu w twórczości Baumana, jako sposobu na pogłębienie zrozumienia między różnymi sposobami widzenia świata, a zarazem wspólnotowe wypracowywanie rozwiązań dla istniejących problemów. W ostatniej części tekstu analizie poddane zostały rozpoznania socjologa dotyczące potrzeby rozwijania odpowiedzialności za współczesną kondycję, czego wyrazem miałoby być budowanie „kultury dialogu" opartej na dążeniu do pogłębiania wzajemnego porozumienia i współpracy. Tekst zawiera próbę oceny tak rozumianej strategii oporu względem współczesnej sytuacji nacjonalistycznego wzmożenia.