AN INTELLECTUAL ITINERARY OF ZYGMUNT BAUMAN: MARXISM, MODERNITY AND THE LIQUID

UM ITINÉRARIO INTELECTUAL DE ZYGMUNT BAUMAN: O MARXISMO, A MODERNIDADE E O LÍQUIDO

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ABSTRACT: This article proposes to analyze the work of Zygmunt Bauman and its historical phases with the aim of creating an intellectual itinerary that helps researchers understand and deepen his work. By comparing the phases of his thoughts, books, interviews, and important passages in his career, a chronological itinerary was constructed that allows us to understand and clarify the author's perspectives. It will also be possible to expand this understanding through bibliographical research and analysis of the notes made by its foremost commentators (Aguiluz-Ibargüen, 2009; Béjar, 2007; Smith, 1999; Beilharz, 2000; Tester, 2004), as they reveal relevant aspects and reasons why his work took shape as we know it. The result of the research highlights and captures nuances of the Polish sociologist's life and work, allowing the academic community to access aspects that are usually unknown, but essential for a full understanding of his legacy.


RESUMO: O presente artigo propõe analisar a obra de Zygmunt Bauman e suas fases históricas com o objetivo de engendrar um itinerário intelectual que auxilie pesquisadores a conhecer e aprofundar seus trabalhos. Cotejando as fases de seu pensamento, livros, entrevistas e passagens importantes de sua trajetória, foi construído um roteiro cronológico que permite compreender e esclarecer perspectivas do autor. Também será possível ampliar esse entendimento por meio de pesquisa bibliográfica e análise dos apontamentos feitos pelos seus principais comentaristas (Aguiluz-Ibargüen, 2009; Béjar, 2007; Smith, 1999; Beilharz, 2000; Tester, 2004), na medida em que se descortinam aspectos relevantes e razões pelas quais seu trabalho se constituiu da forma que conhecemos. O resultado da pesquisa evidencia e capta nuances da vida e da obra do sociólogo polonês, permitindo à comunidade acadêmica acessar aspectos usualmente desconhecidos, mas indispensáveis para apreensão plena de seu legado.


RESUMEN: Este artículo pretende analizar la obra de Zygmunt Bauman y sus fases históricas con el fin de crear un itinerario intelectual que ayude a los investigadores a conocer mejor su obra. Al cotejar las fases de su pensamiento, libros, entrevistas y pasajes importantes de su carrera, hemos construido una hoja de ruta cronológica que nos permite comprender y clarificar las perspectivas del autor. También será posible ampliar esa comprensión a través de la investigación bibliográfica y del análisis de los señalamientos de sus principales comentaristas (Aguiluz-Ibargüen, 2009; Béjar, 2007; Smith, 1999; Beilharz, 2000; Tester, 2004), en la medida en que se revelen aspectos relevantes y las razones por las cuales su obra se constituyó de la forma en que la conocemos. El resultado de la investigación pone de relieve y capta matices de la vida y obra del sociólogo polaco, permitiendo a la comunidad académica acceder a aspectos habitualmente desconocidos, pero imprescindibles para comprender cabalmente su legado.

Introduction

This work seeks to construct Zygmunt Bauman's intellectual itinerary based on the analysis of the bibliography from his main interpreters (Aguiluz-Ibargüen, 2009; Béjar, 2007; Smith, 1999; Beilharz, 2000; Tester, 2004), his works, significant influences on his thought, interviews granted, and life trajectory. We begin by pointing out, chronologically, the reported experiences and the most relevant influences throughout his academic life and the phases of his thought, according to bibliographical research. In doing so, we aim to highlight aspects that are often overlooked by researchers and those interested in the author, which are typically confined to reading and analyzing his books. Our general objective is to broaden the possibility of understanding the author and encourage an expanded perspective of his legacy.

The specific objectives of this work are linked to Bauman's thought phases, whose subdivisions constitute separate topics of the article: a) analysis, interpretation, and understanding of Bauman's first thought phase, known as the "Marxist phase"; b) analysis, interpretation, and understanding of the second phase of his thought, known as the "modern phase"; c) analysis, interpretation, and understanding of the author's third thought phase, also known as the "mosaic phase" (Beilharz, 2000; Smith, 1999; Blackshaw, 2005).

We used the following authors with their respective works for reading, interpretation, analysis, and construction of Bauman's trajectory in this article:


² Mexican sociologist and professor at the National Autonomous University of Mexico - UNAM (Mexico).
³ Spanish sociologist and professor at the University of Madrid (Spain).

d) Peter Beilharz⁵, who wrote the books “The Bauman Reader” (2001), and “Zygmunt Bauman: Dialectics of Modernity” (2000).


In addition to the authors mentioned above and their works, the reading of the book “Bauman & a Educação” (2009 by Felipe Quintão de Almeida, Ivan Marcelo Gomes, and Valter Bracht was essential, as it is certainly the Brazilian book with the most information about the author's trajectory.

Between the years 1960 and 1975 (called the first phase), Bauman conducted analyses based on the relationship between socialism and capitalism, which could be considered the Marxist phase (Tester, 2004). This is the least known phase in Brazil. The second phase, according to these authors, spans from the 1980s to the end of the 1990s, and was marked by studies on ideas regarding order, modernity, and postmodernity. The third phase, called mosaic or liquid, began in the 2000s and is the author's best-known phase (Beilharz, 2000; Smith, 1999; Blackshaw, 2005).

One way to understand the work of an author of Bauman's stature is to know his past and itinerary, the influences on his thoughts, and the moments he went through throughout his career. It was with the intention of showing a bit of these moments, through bibliographical research, reading and studying what those considered his main interpreters wrote, analyzing his interviews and reports, and seeking clues on the internet, as well as experiences lived by his side on three occasions (twice in Leeds, UK, in 2012 and 2015 and once in Rio de Janeiro,

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⁴ English sociologist and professor emeritus at Loughborough University in Leicestershire (United Kingdom).
⁵ Australian sociologist and professor at Curtin University in Bentley (Australia).
⁶ British sociologist and professor at the University of Hull, in Hull (United Kingdom).
Brazil, in 2015), that we constructed this article. With it, we also aim to show and clarify some points of Bauman's history that are often unknown to most of his readers and that we consider important for understanding his books and articles. The reader will undoubtedly discover essential points that are presented below, enabling analyses of the author's work to be conducted with more fidelity and rigor.

Next, we will address the three phases, seeking to establish a parallel not only with significant historical moments in the author's life, but also with relevant influences, influential teachers in his formation, family members, and determining moments for his trajectory as a professor and sociologist.

First Phase: Life History and Marxism in Bauman

Bauman was born in Poznan, Poland, on November 19, 1925. Of Jewish and poor origin, he fled in 1939 (at the age of 14) to the Soviet Union during the German invasion. He spent his adolescence as a foreign Pole in an environment where cultural differences were not socially visible. In Europe, Nazism, xenophobia, injustice, and poverty were rampant.

At the age of 18 (1943), he enlisted in the army to fight the Germans on the Polish front and pursued a military career in the Soviet Union. At the end of World War II, in 1945, having reached the highest rank in the army, he decided to pursue an academic path and also began his activism in the Polish Communist Party in 1946.

The following year, 1947, he began studying in Warsaw, where he attended the Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences. The most remembered professors in the few interviews where he addresses his past are Stanislaw Ossowski and Julian Hochfeld.

Keith Tester (Bauman, 2011a) uncovered the reasons why Bauman does not like to talk about his life, while at the same time, he accurately captured what he called a need to relate his biography to his social thought. Rarely has he provided as much information as in the interview granted to Tester, which turned into a book, allowing a rare understanding of the relationship between the author's life and his thoughts. Tester ventures to say that the characters of the wanderer and the tourist that appear in his works on postmodernity are, in fact, a reflection of his life and experiences of forced exile. The author revealed to Peter Beilharz (2000), another interpreter of his writings, that he does not like to talk about his life trajectory. In the book The Fall of Public Man, Richard Sennett (1999), an author whom Bauman greatly admired, argues that contemporary culture has corroded public life to such an extent that it has destroyed and
dismantled the boundary between public and private. "You are good and honest to the extent that you are prepared to tell everything to others. The cult of celebrity dominates popular culture. This leads to the end of public life as it prohibits us from having anything in common other than secrets, lies, and intrusions". For Bauman, says Tester (Bauman, 2011a), the refusal to speak about oneself is a refusal to accept this game.

Among other legacies, it is recorded that they strongly influenced him regarding the dimensions of ethics and practice. This theoretical multiplicity, in relation to different places (universities), that he came to know later, is remembered by him in a passage in an interview with Tester (Bauman, 2011a, p. 29, our translation).

When, at the end of the 1950s, I began visiting places abroad, I was impressed by the one-sidedness and narrow profile of the sociological visions taught elsewhere in the world. Where else but in Warsaw were Marxist and positivist traditions, scientific and humanistic sociologies, evolutionary and structuralist approaches, "naturalistic" and "culturalist" views of social reality, statistical and hermeneutic strategies taught side by side, as living, complementary, and non-exclusive alternatives, free from the straitjacket of chronopolitics?

Kheit Tester (2004), Helena Béjar (2005) and Maya Aguiluz-Ibargüen (2005) highlight this aspect of his intellectual formation in Warsaw as decisive and extremely relevant for understanding Bauman's epistemology. In this regard, Aguiluz-Ibargüen revisits in an article, fundamental to understanding Bauman's work (Topologia y marcos significativos em Zygmunt Bauman, 2009), the theoretical, political, and biographical influences received by him during the years of his academic formation.

She identifies that in the small Poznan, where he was born, what happened in Poland until the end of the century was locally reproduced. It was a scene of resistance to neighboring hegemonic powers that prevented Poland from being an autonomous homeland. She portrays Warsaw as resisting the Nazis and the local university as a bustling center of autonomous creation, preventing it from merely reproducing the academic orthodoxies validated by Stalinism. According to the author, it was a place from which:

[...] I deal with themes specific to his discourse, such as the construction of European modernity and social estrangements within regimes of knowledge and power, known in Central and Eastern Europe in the second half of the last century to contextualize the character of his always dissident sociology in an itinerary that combines biographical aspects with intellectual and conceptual genealogies, not without delimiting within a period roughly from the second post-war period until the nineties, the crises and dispositions of political powers and forced displacements of communities and populations in order to
articulate historical contexts with Baumanian textuality (Aguiluz-Ibargüem, 2009, p. 316, our translation).

Ossowski and Hochfeld, little known in the West (Bauman, 2011a, p. 30), were responsible for instilling in Bauman's thinking the idea of constant incompleteness, self-criticism, and ongoing recapitulation. Influenced by their teachings, he states that "sociology has no other meaning than a permanent commentary on the lived experience of human beings," as transient and obsessively self-totalizing as that experience itself" (2011a, p. 30, our translation).

The ambition to understand is linked to an idea of incompleteness that makes the sociologist's opinion valuable to those facing life's challenges. Politically socialist, Ossowsksi and Hochfeld found sociological purpose and vocation in the understanding that comprehending people's suffering could help alleviate their problems or cease the social production of misery. Bauman (2011a) incorporated the message that if the world can be changed, it will be through reflection and self-critique.

Also during this period, in 1948, he met Janina at the university. Janina Lewinson-Bauman (1926-2009) published, in 1986, the book Winter in the Morning⁷, which recounts the time she lived with her mother and sister in the Warsaw Ghetto between 1939 and 1945, and how they escaped deportation to the extermination camps. Her father, a medical officer in the Polish army, disappeared in the Russian massacre of Katyn in the spring of 1940. During the writing of the book, she shares with Bauman a past encapsulated for twenty years and leaves deep marks on his thinking.

In the preface of the book Modernity and the Holocaust (initially published in 1989 in England and in 1998 in Brazil), Bauman wrote, "After reading Janina's book, I began to think about how ignorant I was of the facts – or rather, how I did not think about them properly. And it occurred to me that I did not understand what had happened in that 'world that was not mine'" (1998b, p. 09). In his wife's biography, Bauman acknowledges a third turn in his sociology. In an interview with Peter Beilharz (2001, p. 335, our translation), he said, "Gramsci told me what, Simmel how, and Janina for what". She passed away in 2009, at the age of 83, in the same house where Bauman still resides today. The book Winter in the Morning: A Young Girl's Life in the Warsaw Ghetto and Beyond was translated into Portuguese by Carlos Alberto Medeiros and published by Editora Jorge Zahar in 2005 in Brazil.

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⁷ Translated into Portuguese with the title: Inverno na manhã: uma jovem no gueto de Varsóvia (Zahar, 2005).
With Janina Bauman, he had three daughters. Anna Sfard, who is an emeritus professor in the Department of Mathematics Education at the University of Haifa in Israel, conducts research in the learning sciences, focusing on the relationship between thought and communication. Her studies are grounded in the ideas of Wittgenstein and Vygotsky. Lydia Bauman, a painter, resides in London, where she maintains her painting studio. Recently, during a visit to London, she shared details of her relationship with her father and provided one of her artworks to illustrate the cover of the “Dicionário Crítico-Hermenêutico Zygmunt Bauman” (Cassol, Manfio, Silva, 2021). Additionally, her testimony from the first session on Zygmunt Bauman at an event organized by the Brazilian Society of Sociology in Florianópolis in 2019 can be found on YouTube.


Among the previously mentioned books, undoubtedly stands out the one written by his wife, which addresses the issue of dehumanization, a theme that became of great importance in the foundations of Bauman's sociology. Later, inspired by his wife's story, he wrote Modernity and the Holocaust, in which he asserts that social orders ultimately become complicit in dehumanization. He proposed that sociology should demonstrate that the choice to be moral can be made, even if the structure and prevailing thought suggest otherwise. He argued that these are subject to contingencies, so that human dignity lies in this choice.

It is in the meaning of the world for men and women that the key to Bauman's moral approach lies. He was constantly suspicious of this meaning. Sociological practice is related to values that go beyond this science and must speak to everyone beyond peers, reaching ordinary men and women. The dignity of ordinary people must transcend daily humiliations and engage in the practice of imagination in search of alternatives that fit humanity. Béjar (2007, p. 23) says that sociology, for Bauman, arises from the unfinished modern project. It would be the science of unfreedom. For her, this statement represents a robust thesis of Bauman's, as it places freedom, a subject so unsociological, as the object of study of this science. Denied freedom is the object of an unorthodox sociology that opens up to ethics. This point of union between sociology and morality, which occupied space in Bauman's works during the 1990s, for Béjar,
results in the most innovative point of his work and within contemporary sociology, perhaps unique.

While demonstrating all these concerns, Béjar (2007) asserts that sociology as the science of non-freedom, for Bauman, also emphasizes the heavy burden that free will represents, as it is related to responsibility as a heavy load that social subjects bear on their shoulders. The normative interest of sociology has to do with asserting necessary limits to establish a minimum social order. This order is achieved not so much by external coercion but by internalized pressures put into practice by ideology, tradition, and culture (Béjar, 2007). Sociology is, therefore, the science of the limits imposed on freedom

[... ] sociologists’ attention has turned to 'lack of freedom' rather than freedom; if the latter is a fact of nature, the former must be an artificial creation, a product of certain social arrangements, therefore, sociologically more interesting. In the magnificent legacy that the founders of sociology have left us, 'freedom' appears relatively rarely. In the main body of social theory, 'serious considerations' about freedom are few, scattered, and marginal. On the other hand, there is much interest and profound observations on 'social constraints,' pressures, influences, power, coercion, and any other man-made factors by which one would be accused of inhibiting freedom, that natural right of every human being to manifest itself (Bauman, 2014b, p. 11, our translation).

Sociology has the mission of explaining this freedom through the networks of interdependence that form the social world, dependence, and responsibility. To transform the determinism that Bauman calls Durkheimianism into responsibility and to compel men to doubt what, without thinking, out of apathy or convenience, they have accepted as conventional and immutable facts. Regarding sociology as the 'science of non-freedom' and what Bauman called Durkheimianism, there is a long reflection on this in his book Por uma sociologia crítica: um ensaio sobre o senso comum e emancipação

10 Freedom (originally published in 1988), which was translated by Silvana Perrella Brito into Portuguese and published by Editora Academia Cristã in 2014 in Brazil.
11 Toward a Critical Sociology: An Essay on Common Sense and Emancipation.
accessible limits. It is, therefore, a 'reformatory within a conservative attitude,' imbued and codified according to a view of social reality that postulates correction as inevitable but considers the more cruel forms of coercion as superfluous. Its utopian bias can be highlighted when men are faced with the ugliest alternative of fighting for realization; hence the celebration of 'Durkheimianism' inspired by the discovery of the horrors of the Nazis and Stalinists; and the adoption of 'Durkheimianism' in the Communist East, by the gently critical, gently conservative, or moderate intellectual movement (1977, p. 46, our translation).

The Durkheimianism project is related to the sociology of non-freedom, whose main objective concerns order and the internalization of limits. It consists of a model that eliminates instincts and individual selfishness as a way for individuals to follow normative guidelines that cement social order. In this sense and for this reason, it refutes Durkheimian, Parsonian, and post-Parsonian sociology, concerned with the problem of order. Order is not so much a sociological category but a political and material problem that people encounter in their daily lives. Béjar (2007) devotes a critical topic to this issue entitled “Émile Durkheim y el dualismo de la naturaliza humana” in the chapter “La ambivalencia como fundamento del vínculo humano” of her book to analyze what Bauman called the ‘projeto durkhoparsoniano’

The reading of the work Por uma sociologia crítica: um ensaio sobre o senso comum e emancipação (1977) reveals the spirit that prevailed in Warsaw when it was written. Although it was published in 1976 in London, it was conceived much earlier. Like others, however, it was not published because it would not pass through the censorship imposed in Moscow on revisionists and authors who engaged in ideological disputes that called for socialism with democracy. Until then, parts of these books were presented as articles and separate pieces. They were part of a set of works corresponding to what would be Bauman's Marxist entry into the international arena from the 1970s, along with two other books: Fundamentos de sociologia marxista (Bauman, 1975), originally in Polish from 1966, and Socialismo: la utopía activa (2012b), written after being expelled from Poland in 1976 (with versions in English and Spanish). And the following article, Modern times, modern marxism (1967).

According to Beilharz (2000), Smith (1999), Blackshaw (2005), Arguiluz-Ibargüen (2009), and Tester (2004), Bauman's works, which suggest a division of his intellectual trajectory into phases, the first Marxist phase occurs between 1950 and 1970. However, it was not only about Marxism, but also about the denial of the orthodoxy surrounding the University of Warsaw at that time and the construction of a humanistic revisionist path that engaged with
the idea of democracy. This is the least known phase of the author in Brazil. Among the works produced during this period, not necessarily published in the years they were written, stand out: *Os fundamentos de sociologia marxista* (1975); *Socialismo: a utopia ativa* (2012b); *Por uma sociologia crítica: um ensaio sobre o senso comum e emancipação* (1977), *A hermenêutica e a Ciência Social: abordagens da compreensão* (2022).

In 1951, he went through a period of reading, including Antonio Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* (2001), which, according to him, saved him from becoming anti-Marxist. In the book *Bauman sobre Bauman: diálogos com Keith Tester*, 2011 originally published in England under the title *Conversations with Zygmunt Bauman*, in 2001), Bauman says that [...] I owe Gramsci my 'honorable discharge' from Marxist orthodoxy. I do not regret the years of fascination with Marx's ideas. It was through Marx that I arrived at my belief in the infinite and perpetual incompleteness of human potential. [...] If there was disillusionment, it was with the ossified form that the 'official' vulgar version of Marxism took, and more than anything, with the official prohibition on applying Marxist criticism to 'real socialism', with the elimination or depreciation of the ethical core and source of Marxist teachings. Paradoxically, Gramsci saved me from becoming anti-Marxist [...] (2011b, p. 35, our translation).

This is when he rediscovers Marx's moral core. In that decade, Poland opened up to humanistic (or revisionist) Marxism and held a prominent position in the university. In 1953, he was expelled from the army for being Jewish. At that time, he already perceived a growing climate of anti-Semitism in his country as a result of the Stalinism to which he had dedicated his youth.

While completing his doctorate in Warsaw in 1956, Bauman witnessed the increasing tensions between Warsaw and Moscow. At the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev denounced the crimes of Stalinism. The events of February 1956 marked the beginning of the disintegration of the ground annexed by communist utopia. The Marxist egalitarian aspiration had become evidently unattainable within regimes like those that existed there. Following Khrushchev's denunciations of Stalinism at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (1956), events erupted in Poland that became known as the "Polish October". Violent conflicts occurred in the city of Poznan, where Bauman was born, one of the Polish cradles of the reformist movement, seeking to end Polish subjection to the USSR.

Historian Norman Davies states in his work *Heart of Europe: a shortstory of Poland* (Davies, 1984) that, as a result of this movement, an "agreement" was reached that led the Poles
to continue to be subservient to the USSR, which he called a national (autonomous) type of communism. This event, therefore, was marked as a sign of frustrated hopes and aborted freedom for Poland. It served more to prevent new attempts at renewal or liberalization than to actually extinguish dependence on the USSR.

Another significant situation occurred during Wright Mills's visit to conferences in Warsaw, which would later be integrated into his famous work *The Sociological Imagination*, 1959. During this visit, communist leader Vladislav Gomulka made a radio speech, broadcast nationwide, contradicting the thesis defended by Bauman's friend, Leszek Kolakowski, who was also a critic of orthodox Marxism.

Gomulka (born in Krosno in 1905 and died in Warsaw in 1982) joined the Communist Party in 1927, worked in the trade union movement, and, from 1939, fought in the resistance movement against the German occupation. In 1942, in Warsaw, he was appointed first secretary (1943, general secretary) of the Polish Workers' Party (PPR), then illegal, a position he held until 1948. He adopted an attitude of independence from the Soviet Union and tried to find the Polish path to socialism, which led him to oppose, in 1947, the founding of the Cominform (Communist Information Bureau) and the condemnation of Josip B. Tito.

In 1948, accused of "nationalism", he was removed from his position and was imprisoned between 1951 and 1954 without any legal process. After his rehabilitation, during the period of de-Stalinization and following the worker and student uprising in Poznan (October 1956), he was elected general secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR), formed in 1948 as a result of the merger of the Socialist Party with the Communist Party. Gomulka liberalized the communist system, ended land collectivization, sought reconciliation with the Catholic Church, and signed the Warsaw Pact with the Federal Republic of Germany (1970). He failed in economic policy and, as a result of the workers' uprisings of 1970, caused by food shortages, he was forced to resign. His successor was Edward Gierek.

Kolakowski was born on October 23, 1927, in Radom, Poland. He earned his doctorate at the University of Warsaw in 1953. He began his teaching career at the same institution, teaching logic and philosophy until 1969. A scholar of economics and politics, and a member of the ranks of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR), Kolakowski proposed a reinterpretation of Marxist thought based on the notion of 'man', central to him. This led to a rupture and, after certain positions following a trip to the Soviet Union, to his expulsion from the party. Equally 'problematic' and full of consequences was his support for democratization demands promoted by students in the 1960s.
Strongly critical of Stalinism, Kolakowski moved to England and began working at All Saints College, Oxford, spending extended periods of research as a visiting professor at the most prestigious North American and European universities. From his first period, linked to the attempt to revise Marx's thought critically, his powerful work in three volumes dedicated to the "Nascita, sviluppo, dissoluzione del marxismo" [Birth, development, dissolution of Marxism, in English translation] (Sugar, 1980-1985) stands out particularly. He passed away in Oxford in 2009 (Micromega, 2009).

During his stay in Warsaw, Mills declared that sociologists should hold the powerful accountable for the consequences of their actions and that it was essential to show the public how their concerns are linked to the public issues they create. In a passage from the book *Bauman sobre Bauman* (2011a), when asked about this episode, the following observation is made:

Mills, after all, was a thorn in the side of that deeply conformist sociological establishment, having attacked, one by one, all its sacred cows. He was the embodied deviation, the critic of the American creed among its preachers and admirers. [...] During Mills's stay in Warsaw, Gomulka went on the radio to criticize an essay by my friend Leszek Kolakowski. We all trembled; so often singed, we expected the worst. But Mills was cheerful: 'How lucky you are and how happy you must be—the leader of the country responding to philosophical treatises! No one up there pays attention to what I do (Bauman, 2011a, p. 37-38, our translation).

In 1956-1957, he conducted post-doctoral research at the London School of Economics. It was during this time that he encountered the so-called classics Marx, Weber, and Durkheim. *Bauman* (2011a) recounts this in the interview with Tester when asked about the differences he found between Warsaw and London. Shortly after the period known as the "Polish October," Bauman arrived there wondering what had gone wrong with communism and where the dreams destroyed by the regime, which once seemed to be the best solution, would be led.

During that year, he studied the dialectics of social movement and its elite under the guidance of Robert Trelford McKenzie. Born in Vancouver, Canada (1917), McKenzie was a political scientist and was an election commentator at the BBC. He taught political sociology at the London School of Economics, having also been a professor before that at Harvard and Yale. He wrote the books *British Political Parties: The Distribution of Power Within the Conservative and Labour Parties* (1955) and *Angels in Marble: Working Class Conservatism in Urban England* (with Allan Silver) (1968). He passed away in London in 1981.
Bauman's admiration for his supervisor, he recounted, grew as political seminars were dissected, and he "admired his versatile, skeptical, yet serious view of the mysterious ways in which the 'sagacity of reason' made its way amidst the inanities of political practices" (Bauman, 2011a, p. 34, our translation). He also befriended Ralph Miliband, who had a history of proximity concerning his family and theoretical trajectory. A prominent theorist of Marxism of the generation of E. P. Thompson, Eric Hobsbawm, and Perry Anderson. His Jewish family fled to England to escape Nazism. Ralph Miliband is the father of Ed Miliband, leader of the Labour opposition to David Cameron's Conservative government since 2010, and David Miliband, also a politician of the Labour Party.

Ralph's parents, Samuel Miliband and Renia Miliband, lived in the poor area of Warsaw, Poland, and after World War I, in 1922, emigrated to Brussels, Belgium. Samuel Miliband was a member of the Jewish Socialist Party of Poland, an institution that fought for the political, cultural, and social autonomy of Jews and against anti-Semitism. Miliband studied at the London School of Economics and served in the British Navy. He graduated from LSE in 1947 with a doctorate, titled “Popular thought in the French Revolution”, which began in 1947 and was completed in 1956. He taught at Roosevelt College in Chicago.

On September 28, 1948, he became a British citizen. In 1949, he held the position of assistant professor of political science at LSE. He was one of the leaders of the New Left movement that sought to broaden the horizons of the left in Europe and the world, drawing attention to a variety of issues in the fields of culture and politics, issues relating to minorities, gender, and the problems of the underdeveloped world. A friend of Hobsbawm, Harold Laski, and Wright Mills. A critic of the USSR and its satellites, he published numerous works on Marxism, such as Parliamentary Socialism: a study in the politics of labour (1961) and Marxism and Politics (1977).

Regarding the so-called classics of sociology, he ironically said that he did not recall until then this expression being selectively applied to the triad of authors as is commonly seen. For him, it was Talcott Parsons who was responsible for influencing a certain type of academia. He believed that each sociology constructs its myths and gives them the relevance it believes they deserve. It is noteworthy how he came to understand sociology and to build his line of reasoning with the significant influence of professors Ossowskii and Hochfeld. Also, the blatant impatience and critical stance towards Parsons, often expressed ironically, as in this passage:

Parsons' effort to rewrite the history of sociology as an uninterrupted line of progress, ending in the comprehensive and final Parsonian synthesis, was an
intellectual polishing of the (fortunately soon frustrated) proposal for a type of ecclesiastical theoretical domination, and this proposal needed saints and demanded a strictly open composition pantheon, which suspects and resists any claim of monopoly, does not need to divide canonical and apocryphal knowledge. Warsaw sociology certainly did not. When the winds blowing from the other side of the Atlantic brought news of canonization, they found Ossowski and Hochfeld - unlike some of their younger, more pliable colleagues - quite indifferent, generally critical, and, when necessary, confronting the new fashion for which they saw no utility (Bauman, 2011a, p. 32, our translation).

The persistent critique of so-called sociological schools reveals, on the one hand, a strong connection with his professors and, on the other hand, what he called the comfort of not belonging to a line that would leave him stuck and restricted to a single type of analysis. This stance seems to be related to a past tainted by what he considers mistakes, when he was part of the army and defended Stalinism, which later, after reading Gramsci, marking a turning point in his career, was not only abandoned but also criticized by him.

Another curiosity marks his time in London:

[...] it was during the past year at LSE that I was told sociology has its classics, I was shocked by what I heard. I also discovered that it was possible to be a sociology professor without mastering the history of philosophy and social thought, or, in that sense, wandering through the vast expanses of culture, and once again, I was shocked (Bauman, 2011a, p. 35, our translation).

It seems that the sociological education at the University of Warsaw had some professors who positioned themselves to question the Stalinist model. From Bauman's accounts and those of his interpreters, it is possible that there was, among some researchers, a great interest not only in questioning orthodox Marxism but also in fundamentally allowing their students to expand their studies beyond the limits of one school or theory. This observation arises from the biographies of some of the teachers and academics who came from there and the events that marked the university during Bauman's time there, from which he was expelled later, along with other professors, for questioning the orthodox model and encouraging students to do the same.

Another relevant point to highlight is the insufficient material produced about this first phase and its consequences for understanding the author in Brazil. Much of the criticism he receives from Marxists that he would be a postmodern author is related to this lack of knowledge not only of his works but fundamentally of his life history. Very few authors who declare themselves as such have experienced the situations Bauman experienced.
From the battles of Berlin, with the uniform of the Red Army, to participation in the Communist Party and his expulsion and persecution by the same during the period that culminated in his expulsion from Poland. May the misunderstanding about him not be based on superficial knowledge of his works in Portuguese, and may the Marxist criticisms find more specific arguments than labels that, more often than not, are not desired for oneself. Bauman always condemned this kind of academic relationship, and it was one of the most important lessons from his personal and intellectual journey.

In an important and revealing excerpt from the interview given to Simon Dawes, this is evident:

In truth, I never "belonged" to the school, to any monastic order, intellectual community, political party, or interest group; I did not seek admission to any of them, much less did I do much to deserve an invitation; nor would any of they relate me - at least in unrestricted terms - as "one of our own." I believe my claustrophobia is incurable - feeling, as I tend to feel, uncomfortable in any closed room, always trying to figure out what is on the other side of the door. I think I am destined to remain an outsider to the end, lacking, as I do, the indispensable qualities of an academic insider: loyalty to a school, conformity to its procedures, and a willingness to accept the criteria of cohesion and coherence endorsed by that school. And frankly, I don't care (Bauman, 2012a, p. 103, our translation).

In 1960, Bauman returned to Warsaw and assumed the chair of sociology. He publishes articles on the themes of culture and society and gains visibility in the Anglo-Saxon circuit. His investigations focus more on cultural themes. Gramsci is still strongly present in his writings, and in 1963, he published a text titled Antonio Gramsci czyli socjologia w działaniu (Bauman, 1963) or Gramsci, that is, sociology in Action, in the Culture and Society Journal of Warsaw (free translation). According to Tester (2004), the break with orthodoxy is strongly represented in this essay.

He began to occupy the chair of general sociology at the University of Warsaw in 1964. At the same time, he associated with Bronislaw Baczko and Leszek Kolakowski. Ibargüen (2009) believes that Baczko, a representative of the Franco-Polish school, was the author responsible for texts that influenced Bauman regarding the creation of the "gardener state" metaphor that would become famous in his later texts.

While examining his works, it is possible to find in the book Modernity and Ambivalence ((originally written in 1991) a note that refers to a text by this colleague, on page 304 (note 21 - Comment sortir de laterreur: Thermidor et la revolution, Paris: Gallimard, 1989,
In this excerpt from the note, the text deals with the republic ridding itself of the impure and deceitful, and the revolution, according to the text, should advance through exclusion. Now, the metaphor created by Bauman speaks of the weeds that must be removed by the gardener state from its flower bed so that they do not spoil the cultivation of the good plants that are there. The State should be vigilant so that pests do not hinder healthy and controlled growth in the name of purity and the elimination of the unworthy that may appear there.

In 1968, due to the pressures and censorship imposed on intellectuals and Jewish students who were fighting against the Polish one-party system, he was expelled from the University of Warsaw, along with five other colleagues, accused of leading student protests and uprisings.

During the period from 1968 to 1971, he passed through the Universities of Tel Aviv in Israel, where relatives of his wife Janina lived. He visited and received offers to teach in Montreal (Canada), Prague (Czech Republic), and Vienna (Austria). He also received invitations to coordinate sociology departments in Canberra (Australia) and Leeds (England). In 1971, he arrived in the city of Leeds, where he took over as head of the Sociology Department until his retirement in 1990.

In 1972, his inaugural lecture at the University of Leeds focused on culture, values, and the science of society. He recalled his professors from Warsaw, especially Ossowski and Hochfeld, and the idea of ethics as the key to understanding phenomena. He showed his students the research and study conducted during his post-doctoral studies in London titled *Between Class and Elite: Evolution of the British Labour Movement* (1972), published in Poland in 1960.

In 1973, the texts that would give rise to the first version of "Culture as a Praxis" appeared. The idea of cultural order and social group cohesion forms an inseparable pair from the practices that constitute it, the demarcation of symbolic and physical boundaries, and the consequent development of exclusionary logic. He began a dialogue with anthropology, especially with the theory of Claude Lévi-Strauss and later with Mary Douglas, whom his interpreters would call one of "his cognitive frameworks." In 1999, he reissued this book with a comprehensive introduction to the concept of culture, sounding an alarm about the need to consider the relationship of this concept with ideas of ambiguity and contingency.

Thirty years ago, I attempted to disentangle the evident inconsistencies in the uses of "culture" by separating three distinct discursive contexts in which the

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13 Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908-2009).
14 Mary Douglas (1921-2007).
concept became entangled. In this attempt, I proceeded from the assumption that the inconsistencies in question were, in principle, correctable. I was guided by the hope that, with due care, the confusion of distinct categories hidden behind a single term could be avoided and prevented. Maintaining the distinction between three concepts that offer three correlated yet different meanings for the idea of culture remains an essential condition for any attempt to clarify the subject of disagreement. However, this operation no longer ends up eliminating the ambivalence that discourse on culture necessarily entails. More importantly, I do not think that the elimination of such ambivalence that truly matters—the one that first prompted me to dissect the complex meaning of culture but was not affected by the operation and continued to be an elusive target—was the accidental effect of negligence or methodological error. I believe, on the contrary, that the inherent ambivalence of the idea of culture, which faithfully reflected the ambiguity of the historical condition it aimed to capture and describe, was what made this idea such a fruitful and persistent instrument of perception and reflection (Bauman, 2012c, p. 18, our translation).

The distinct discursive contexts referred to have to do with the ideas of culture as concept, structure, and praxis, which are the topics transformed into chapters in the book in question.

In 1976, Bauman published Socialismo: la utopía activa (Bauman, 2012b)\(^\text{15}\), perhaps with the intention of reclaiming utopia from its ideological hijacking. In the early pages of the book, he refers to Mills and his book A imaginação sociológica, in a clear reference to that conference held in Warsaw in 1956. On May 1, 2012, I was with Bauman for the first time at his home in Lawnswood Gardens, Leeds (UK). During this stay, twice our conversation was interrupted by the sound of the doorbell. Both times it was books arriving in the mail, and on one occasion, he was receiving some copies of this book in Spanish, titled Socialismo: la utopía activa, from the Argentine publisher Nueva Visión (2012b). He quickly answered the door and returned with one of the books in hand. He handed it to me, saying, ”an old book from 40 years ago, before you were born. It's for you, it was just published in Argentina.” I thanked him for the book and was flattered, hardly imagining that it would be an important part of constructing this article years later.

During the same period in which he made the shift from Marxism through the Gramscian route, he left the army, went to London, and was expelled from his homeland. It reads in the introduction:

\[\text{The inadequacy of treating utopias as predictions ended up being, either false, or plans that failed to prove viable, and makes it evident that we do not accept}\]

\(^{15}\) It has not yet been published in Portuguese; it is only published in Spanish.
the idea that every moment of human history is, to a greater or lesser extent, an open situation; a situation that is not eternally determined by the structure of its past and that can lead to a chain of events (not only in the subjective sense, considering the state of our knowledge, but also in an objective sense, considering a deep knowledge of the past and present that could have been gathered and processed only if you could have perfect data processing technology). People, said C. Wright Mills, "can become aware of the predictions made about their activities, and can - and often do - reorient themselves and agree with them; they can refute or corroborate these predictions. What they do is not, for now, subject to every correct prediction. As long as men have some degree of freedom, this will not be easily predictable" ([our translation] Mills, apud Bauman, 2012b, p. 08).

The theme of utopia is of great importance to Bauman. It was first to defeat Nazism and then because of his belief in the socialist project that he joined the army and dedicated part of his young life. The utopia of an egalitarian system gradually crumbled when Stalinism proved to be as radical and barbaric a model as the one it fought against. Turning against it and his family for being Jewish and for questioning this model caused a radical change in his thinking. Having lived on both sides of history and still today having his life marked by these facts, the utopia he defends seeks to escape the ideological hijacking that suffocates and ends possibilities of dreaming of equality and social justice.

In 2013, Bauman received the title of an honorary doctorate at the University of Poznan (in his homeland). During the ceremony, a group of right-wing Polish nationalists protested vehemently against him for about fifteen minutes. The protests occurred because they considered him a traitor to the homeland due to his participation in his youth with the Stalinist army. Documents from the time revealed that he participated in the secret service of the Red Army for three years. In the recorded images made available by the group that harassed him in a video posted on an internet platform, one sees a disappointed and reflective author as he listens to the shouts and chants against him. This video and this part of Bauman's history show that an author of his stature goes through dilemmas and controversies, sometimes even in bad faith, others as a consequence of his life history. The way stories are told about him, which are not always accurate or clear and elucidative, end up generating situations like this.

In an interview with The Guardian, given to Aida Edemariam (2007), Bauman reveals resentment towards the historian Bogdan Musial, who published an article about him in the Polish right-wing magazine Ozon, and towards the sociologist Andreas Hess, who republished

16 The unusual fact can be seen in the following link, from the perspective of the nationalists who protested against the author. It will also be possible to see how much of the audience was applauding Bauman: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QVIFnMbr3g.
the same article in the Irish Times. Regarding his past, Bauman speaks little, but clarifies and questions the information about him in this interview\(^\text{17}\).

In 1978, Bauman wrote *Hermeneutics and Social Science*, in which he defined the interpretative horizon of sociology. In the introduction to this work, one finds:

> [...] the challenge that hermeneutics faces in relation to the idea that Social Sciences have been able to live up to the standards of the logic and authority of the Natural Sciences has two problems: consensus and truth. Therefore, the Social Sciences, in establishing their scientific status, should be limited to proving that their rules of consensus and their standard of truth in the interpretation of meaning have reached a degree comparable to what had been achieved in the study of nature. This book aims to discuss the most important attempts offered to test this. Certainly, the ongoing efforts to overcome the challenge of hermeneutics do not exhaust themselves with the history of sociology (Bauman, 2022, p. 13-14, our translation).

In a way, it can be considered a milestone book regarding the departure from the Marxist phase, as his interpreters claim. The author's concern is gradually redefined and marked by a position contrary to the ideas of consensus and truth. It represents a liberation from the time of persecution he experienced, from the impossibilities of publication, and from the distancing from authoritarian logic. He begins to express criticisms of the so-called classics of sociology and of science as an instrument of deprivation and formatting of subjects. He reaffirms the need for commitment to a sociology contrary to the positivist logic that makes nature its object.

**Second phase: order and postmodernity**

In the mid-1980s, considered the decade in which he entered what his interpreters claim to be his second phase, he published three books that mark the rupture with this first phase and the arrival of perspectives that, for some, can be considered postmodern. Bauman did not consider himself a postmodernist, and this is evident in the interview he gave to Pallares-Burke (2004, p. 371, our translation):

> One of the reasons I started talking about 'liquid modernity' and not about 'postmodernity' (my latest works avoid that term) is that I got tired of trying to clarify a semantic confusion that does not distinguish postmodern sociology from the sociology of postmodernity, 'postmodernism' from 'postmodernity.'

\(^\text{17}\) The interview can be seen at the following link: (https://www.theguardian.com/books/2007/apr/28/academicexperts.highereducation).
In my vocabulary, 'postmodernity' means a society (or, if you prefer, a type of human condition), while 'postmodernism' refers to a worldview that can arise, but not necessarily, from the postmodern condition. I have always sought to emphasize that, just as being an ornithologist does not mean being a bird, being a sociologist of postmodernity does not mean being a postmodernist, which I definitely am not. Being a postmodernist means having an ideology, a perception of the world, and a certain hierarchy of values that, among other things, dismiss the idea of normative regulation of the human community, assume that all kinds of human life are equal, that all societies are equally good or bad; in short, an ideology that refuses to make any judgment and to seriously debate issues related to vicious and virtuous ways of life, because, ultimately, it believes that there is nothing to be debated. That is postmodernism. But I have always been interested in the sociology of postmodernity; that is, my subject has always been to understand this curious and, in many ways, mysterious type of society that is emerging around us, and I see it as a condition that still remains eminently modern in its ambitions and modus operandi (that is, in its effort of compulsive, obsessive modernization), but which is devoid of the old illusions that the end of the journey was just ahead. In that sense, postmodernity is, for me, modernity without illusions.

In 1982, in the book *Memorias de classe: la prehistoria y la sobrevida de las clases* (Bauman, 2011c), the Foucauldian presence can be seen in the disciplinary configuration of society, production, and producers. Bauman constructs an explanatory view of industrialism, according to Maya Aguiluz, of a psychosociological nature, which highlights the other side of the political economy of capital. In the biopolitical circumstances in which the relationship between the intellectual and non-intellectual class is constructed, there is an imposition by those who consider themselves in better conditions to access the rules that ensure truth, moral judgment, and refined and appropriate taste.

Bauman (2011a) demonstrates the difference between controlled and uncontrolled space, also highlighting the difference between civility and barbarism. This so-called myth of enlightenment found, at a certain point, the path of the relationship between knowledge and power. Political science, in modernity, materialized as a mechanism of government, discipline, and order that was a fundamental condition for the ambitions of the modern State. Later, he will revisit this analysis in what was considered by his interpreters to be the second phase of his thought (modern/postmodern phase).

Janina Bauman published in 1986, *Inverno na Manhã: uma jovem nos guetos de Varsóvia*, recounting the years she lived with her mother and sister in Leszno and their survival in concentration camps. This book, published by his wife, generated a huge influence on his subsequent works and led him from criticisms of Marxism to Nazism. According to his interpreters (Tester, 2004; Aguiluz-Ibargüen, 2009) and according to himself (Bauman, 2011a), in several passages, this book contributes to emphasizing in his works the idea of the modern
project related to the consequent massacres stemming from it. He also published that year, "Freedom" (translated and published in Brazil in 2014), which is key to understanding this new range of concepts he works with. The main question of the book revolves around the idea of 'freedom-dependence'.

 [...] The only thing that matters in becoming and staying free is that the "free society," that is, the society of free individuals, will not prohibit us from doing what we want and refrain from punishing us for those acts. However, here, the message becomes deceptive. The absence of prohibitions and punitive sanctions is certainly the necessary condition for us to act according to our desires, but it is not sufficient. We may be free to leave the country if we wish, but we may not have the money for a ticket. We may be free to develop our skills in the field of our choice, but there may not be a vacancy where we want to study. We may desire to work in a job according to our interests but not find the job available. We may say what we want, only to find that there is no way to make ourselves heard. So, freedom means more than the absence of restrictions. To do things, we need resources, but it appears - deceptively - that this does not matter (Bauman, 2014b, p. 08).

It is from the books Legisladores e Intérpretes (2010), Modernidade e Holocausto (1998b) and Modernidade e Ambivalência (1999a) that Bauman begins his trilogy of criticism of modernity and its "utopias/dystopias," increasing his interest in the theme of morality. From there, the key concept of his work becomes order, which is fundamental for his analysis of modern civilization. In the aforementioned trilogy, this concept appears as central in his writings.

The idea of the empire of order appears in the work Legisladores e Intérpretes (2010), showing that actions in modernity are predictable because they are not subject to change and unrestricted hierarchy. There is an idea that someone is in control of situations, interfering with probabilities, manipulating situations, and ensuring that things do not happen contingently. The author highlights that: "[...] a monopolistic right to assign meaning and to judge all forms of life from the superior standpoint of this monopoly is the essence of modern social order" (1999a). Therefore, rational and cognitive standards are defined as the key for societies to proceed in an orderly manner and to be attentive to any possibility of inflection. However, he analyzes that the modern dream ended up reproducing the opposite, what he calls ambivalence: utopia ended up turning into dystopia.

The issue of ambivalence came to an end in 1990, the same year he retired from the University of Leeds. He begins to dedicate himself to writing orderly about the meanings of modern society. In the following year, 1991, he released Modernidade e Ambivalência (1999a),
a work in which he dedicates himself to understanding the compulsive practice of structuring everything (in solid modernity) to the discourse on externality with an existential halo and the Jewish experience as a proto-experience of modern culture (of always being everywhere, and out).

In the same year, he published what was his favorite book, *Mortality, Immortality and Other Life Strategies* (*Mortalidad, inmortalidad y otras estrategias de vida*, translated into Spanish, 2014a). In this book, according to the critical essay by Eva Kärfeve (Kärfeve, 2011), Bauman ventures into areas such as philosophy, psychology, history, and sociology, becoming susceptible to criticism from the perspective of a general theory of the sciences.

In 1992, he published *Intimations of Pos modernity* (not translated into Portuguese), which gathers articles and essays dedicated to the critique of reason and modern violence. He locates in the culture of consumption a new genre of social dependencies of ephemeral identifications and the social production of the excluded from the market and its defective consumers. In the following year, 1993, *Êtica Pós-Moderna* (1997), hits the shelves and the market in Latin America.

In 1995, on his seventieth birthday, he was awarded the title of professor emeritus by the universities of Leeds and Warsaw. To honor him, Richard Kilminster and Ian Varcoe organized and edited a series of essays titled *Culture, Modernity and Revolution: Essays in Honour of Zygmunt Bauman*, which was released in 1996. In the same year, he published a book that would later be titled in Portuguese as *Vida em fragmentos: sobre a ética pós-moderna* (2011b), in which he writes about violence, space, the new excluded, and ethical emptiness.

The lectures he gave in Warsaw, compiled, constitute a book released in 1997, translated into Portuguese the following year as *O mal estar da Pós-Modernidade* (1998a). The following year (1998), he published *Work, consumerism and new poor* (1998a) and *Globalização: as consequências humanas* (1999b). In both, Bauman examines the phenomenon of exclusions amidst the more subtle stratifications hidden within the idea of interconnectedness. The speed and possibility of mobility, independent spaces, global tourists, and elites contrast with global migrations and local exclusions. It is also this year that he received the largest European sociology award. He was awarded the Theodor Adorno Prize for the entirety of his work.

In 1999, he published *Em busca da Política* (2000), addressing topics such as freedom, fear, the deconstruction of politics, the meeting between the public and the private, and the construction of collectivity and respect in search of a democratic future. In the same year,
Dennis Smith published the first intellectual biography of the author titled *Zygmunt Bauman: profeta da pós-modernidade* (our translation).

**Third Phase: Mosaic or Liquid**

In 2000, what his interpreters call the mosaic or liquid phase began with the publication of his book, most widely known worldwide, *Liquid Modernity*. Like other contemporary sociologists, Bauman sought to avoid the semantic problems of the term "postmodernity" by creating an alternative concept. He used the metaphor of liquidity derived from the famous phrase "all that is solid melts into air" (Marx, Engels, 1977) as a way to interpret the current social reality and all its complexity. For Bauman:

> The transition from the "solid" phase of modernity to the "liquid" - that is, to a condition in which social organizations (structures that limit individual choices, institutions that ensure the repetition of routines, and patterns of acceptable behavior) can no longer maintain their form for long (nor is it expected that they will), as they decompose and dissolve faster than the time it takes to shape them, and once reorganized, to establish themselves (Bauman, 2007a, p. 7, our translation).

For him, routines, habits, and rituals began to unravel or at least show themselves weak. With this, the contemporary is marked by the end of patterns, securities, and certainties. Guided by increasingly ephemeral values, people's lives are under constant threat of instability and inconsistency.


> The separation between power and politics is visible in the overvaluation of the individual at the expense of the State, the weakening of the idea of community, the failure of long-term planning, and the decline of guiding institutions and individual accountability for the failure or success of personal life. This transition from solid to liquid presupposes events that materialized in modernity and have intensified in the contemporary moment (2015, p. 250, our translation).

The idea of fluidity permeates the development of the concept of liquid throughout its construction and development. In several works, Bauman (2001, 2007, 2007a, 2007b, 2008) emphasizes this character of loss of institutional regulation and guarantees that consumer society offers. The notion of unrestrained consumption by individuals as a way to fit into
society, to exorcise desires to possess, turns their lives into something as disposable as what they consume.

In Brazil, the liquid phase is the author's most well-known, and perhaps part of the reason for some misunderstanding of his thought, since access to earlier works is essential to understand the paths taken by the author up to this phase and his positions regarding the interpretation of social reality.

Undoubtedly, Bauman influenced commentators on the human condition. His primary function was and still has been to translate social reality into texts, highlighting what is essential and what is happening, instrumentalizing thinkers to reflect on reality. He did not concern himself with constructing systems or approaching a particular subject through a single theoretical line. For this reason, understanding Bauman is not just an effort to grasp his key concepts; it is necessary to look beyond these concepts. The idea of a mosaic to represent this phase of his thought, as well as the liquid, relates to the number of works (pieces of a puzzle) produced within the logic of constructing an understanding of contemporary society.

He believed that sociology, more than any other discipline, is the most capable of embracing and capturing reality. If human experience, for him, does not respect rigid boundaries between the social, the political, the economic, or the poetic, neither will sociology. This singularity, which for some would supposedly be a weakness, is, in fact, his greatest and deepest strength (Bauman, 2011a).

Since the 1960s, he asserted that "to understand man, we must bring together everything we have discovered by penetrating the different aspects of his unified life process" (Bauman, 2011a, p. 15). This is because "the world implies something that is brought together after it has been divided; what we have in mind, however, is the kind of unity that exists before any division has occurred" (2011a, p. 15, our translation).

What Bauman aimed to do was to approach a proposal for eclectic sociology. Not in the sense of self-exaltation or self-satisfaction, since in this case, the need for eclecticism arises because human life is inherently comprehensive and diverse and, therefore, impossible to grasp through classification. This means that, by not delimiting boundaries in an immutable way (as schools and their defenders often do in academia), it is possible to realize that one is on the path to understanding the unlimited nature of human life. Because of this vision and way of understanding society, he manages to attract so many social thinkers and go beyond the limits of sociology as it is usually understood. His life trajectory reveals why he holds such a stance.
In the analysis of his interviews and the approach constructed by his commentators, it is possible to understand why the author thinks this way. Not only in sociological works did he find reasons to analyze and think about society. In the indeterminacy of social life captured by literature, for example, one can find clearer ways to apprehend reality (Bauman, 2011a, p. 17), even though he is aware of the fictional basis of these writings.

He practiced and promoted thought about the relationships, situations, and forces experienced and confronted by men and women. He transcended academic boundaries through a posture that was always attentive to social reality, which was expressed in his works as a striking characteristic in his writings or interviews.

For Bauman, the world does not need to be as it is. Faced with what is supposedly obvious, natural, and inevitable, there may be alternatives. According to his interpreters, he apprehended this from the influence received in the development of his social thought through Gramsci and Simmel, authors recurrent in studies dealing with his intellectual trajectory (Bauman, 2011a, p. 17) and in his interviews.

Not only through external stimuli and social structures, which determine everything, do men and women mobilize themselves. On the contrary, they are endowed with the ability and power to construct the world. Gramsci showed him that the "common sense" promoted by dominant structures prevents one from seeing the potential and envisioning alternatives different from those that predominate. Bauman's understanding of culture as a "knife pressing against the future" (Bauman, 2011a, p. 18) highlights Gramsci's influences on his thinking.

Culture emerges as a form of expression of the perception that there is an alternative and a stimulus for men to think differently, in unauthorized ways, about the reality of the world in which they live and build their stories. It was through Gramsci that Bauman broke with the "official Soviet communism" and came to understand that the world is something that the action of social agents can construct.

Gramsci taught him what his social thought should observe, on the one hand, and Simmel, on the other, that the tendency towards the naturalness of the world can incapacitate its agents from the will to transform it. These influences highlight that one of the tasks of Baumanian sociology is to cast a suspicious eye on the assertions of the world in order and balance (Bauman, 2011a).

Social subjects act in unpredictable and ambivalent ways, meaning that sociology needs to capture this flow without ever interrupting or ignoring it. The world, therefore, can be different from what it is, and alternatives for that exist.
Throughout this process, Gramsci taught him what his social thought should observe, while simultaneously enabling him to maintain a commitment to the moral core of Marx's thought. This is how he became one of the main thinkers of "humanistic Marxism" or "Marxist revisionism" in Poland in the 1950s. If, on one hand, Gramsci, pointed out the paths of observing his thought and his construction as a social thinker, on the other, Simmel enabled him what he called a suspicious view of the fact that the world is supposedly operated in an orderly and balanced manner, as he perceives the unpredictable and ambivalent behavior of social subjects in the social world. Conflict, uncertainty, and ambivalence are, therefore, essential parts of social life and provide the conviction that the task of sociology is also to pay attention to this constant aspect so that it is neither ignored nor interrupted (Bauman, 2011a).

Social thought was, for him, indivisibly moral in both context and interests. In sociology, there are possibilities of "re-imagining" and "re-practicing" (Bauman, 2011a, p. 22) that strip the prevailing structure, relationships, and institutions of the idea that they cannot be as vulnerable as commonly imagined. As the individual is no more important than the public persona, the idea is evident that there is a need for a space of debate where people can gather without fear that their hopes will be destroyed due to the public desire for intimacy with the private person.

When asked about the key texts of his formation as a sociologist, he surprises by saying that he does not necessarily believe that the authors commonly called classics (Durkheim, Marx, and Weber) deserve such reverence. And it's not disrespect towards them, but through what he called a rewriting of Parsons' history of sociology, Bauman rejects the canonical and intellectually polished model proposed by him (Bauman, 2011a, p. 32).

He placed them in equal importance with others he called "sociological sociologists," such as Montesquieu, Diderot, Rousseau, Claude Saint-Simon, Comte, Mauss, and Halbwachs. Alongside Weber, he includes Dilthey, Windelband, Rickert, and Werner Sombart. In addition to these, he considered the Polish social thinkers Gumplovicz, Kelles-Kraus, Krzywicki, Czarnowski, and Znaniecki to be great social thinkers.

He claimed that his sin, in the eyes of a model scholar, was not paying reverence to all those considered classics, even to the point of hindering his entry into an established school or "theoretical clique." For these, he always found himself out of place (Bauman, 2011a, p. 33). However, he claimed that he would never trade his freedom for the comfort of belonging to these groups. He said he greatly admired the authors of literature who have an expanded vision...
of reality and would like to, like them, access the compartments that constitute the treasure of human thought and have the capacity and sensitivity for possibilities he had never discovered.

To combat the apparent naturalness of social reality, it is necessary to oppose common sense. Only then is it possible to reveal social contingencies. On the other hand, contrary to the idea that what happens is inevitable, it always shows that there is an alternative, and therein lies the importance of responsibility linked to freedom in the face of any determinism. By highlighting humanistic and emancipatory sociology (Béjar, 2007), he proposed that moral sense and ambivalence should be investigated as the foundation of human connection.

In 2001, he published "Community" (translated into Portuguese in 2003), a book where he would elucidate the new forms of community and emphasize the individual stripped of the certainties of the past, emerging in the new context as solely responsible for their actions. In the same year, Tester conducted a lengthy interview that became one of the most important books as a source of personal historical information and revelation of theoretical influences. This book, as seen throughout the work, is fundamental to understanding the author. Beilharz (2001) published four volumes of documents by and about Bauman, constituting the author's most comprehensive analysis to date titled Zygmunt Bauman: Masters of Social Thought.

In the following years, Bauman published several books using the analogy of the liquid issue. The one that is his most well-known book in Brazil, Amor líquido: sobre a fragilidade dos laços humanos (2004), followed by Vida líquida (2007a), Medo Líquido (2008), Tempos líquidos (2007b), Cultura no mundo líquido moderno (2013a), Vigilância líquida (2013b) and in Spain, Arte líquido? (2015). Undoubtedly, this is the phase of his life in which he publishes the most books around the world.

A Arte da vida (2009) is explained in the documentary "Lawswood Gardens, 2001" as Bauman's last book, presenting a clear structure with a beginning, middle, and end. In this book, he intended to synthesize the ethical themes addressed in his works over the past thirty years. In the chapter "The Choice," Bauman engages with Levinas's ideas about the basic sense of morality, which is based on existing for others. On the other hand, he also engages with Nietzsche's doctrine, which, according to him, allows us to justify our lifestyle without assuming responsibilities or feeling guilt. Bauman argues that morality depends on the notion that we are more responsible for others than anyone else in the world. Responsibility is unlimited and unconditional. Regardless of how dedicated we are, if we aspire to be moral people, we could always have done more.
Following are books that address themes such as virtual media, individualization, the new problems of cities, the side effects of economic processes and globalization, loneliness, hope, and especially consumer society. Bauman, always attentive to current issues and social dramas of today, did not overlook situations that could generate reflections. In 2016, he published *Babel: entre a certeza e a esperança*, discussing what he calls the interregnum between what has ceased to be and what is not yet, political problems, and the illusory sensation of activism and participation through social networks. In 2017, shortly after the exacerbation of the migration crisis plaguing Europe and the world and the resurgence of political conservatism, reflecting on the consequences of this humanitarian crisis, he published *Estranhos à nossa porta*. And before his passing in January 2017, he was writing the book “*Nascidos em Tempos Líquidos*” with Thomas Leoncini (2018).

**Final considerations**

With approximately 50 books translated and published in Portuguese, in Brazil, and in other languages such as English and Spanish, and reaching the East (China, Japan, South Korea, and the Arab world), Bauman certainly stands among the most prolific sociologists in the world. And even though his work is dense and has reached every corner of the globe, there is still a long interpretive path to be traversed to understand what he has written. There is much work to be done regarding the use and understanding of his books and articles, and it is a challenge to deepen knowledge about this vast material and grasp its concepts and teachings. His works go beyond the social sciences, sociology, and philosophy and are also being used in education, management, and other distinct areas from their foundation. He saw writing not only as a way to thrive, in his words in *Isto não é um diário*:

> [...] I couldn't learn another way to make a living other than writing. A day without writing seems like a lost or criminally aborted day, a duty omitted, a vocation betrayed. [...] the game of words is for me the most heavenly of pleasures. I really enjoy this game - and the pleasure reaches its peak when, after shuffling the cards again, my game seems weak, and I have to force my brain and fight hard to fill in the gaps and overcome the traps. Forget fate: being in motion and jumping over obstacles or kicking them away is what gives life its flavor (Bauman, 2012a, p. 8, our translation).

He took great pleasure in writing, and when we were together (in 2015), he said that we needed to go beyond what he had written, swim against the tide of sameness, and challenge the
logic that endured for a long time. Even when talking about his way of writing and working, he exaggerated by pointing to the inconclusiveness, suggesting endless continuity:

I suspect I am a graphomaniac, by nature and upbringing... An addict who needs one more of his daily doses or who risks the agonies of abstinence. *Ich kann nicht Anders* (I cannot do otherwise). This is probably the deep reason, the one that makes the search for reasons so desperate and inconclusive as it is inescapable (Bauman, 2012a, p. 9, our translation).

Already in old age, but still producing as he had throughout his entire life, he used to challenge his interviewers and visitors by saying that he had already made his contribution, that the new generation should take up the baton and move forward, without turning what he had written into a school or Baumanian line. He said that schools, attributed to authors, tend to ossify, and for that reason, he was against them. Moreover, there is often a dilemma for the social sciences, precisely the fact that an interpreter attributes things to authors that may not be theirs.

What can be learned from his latest works and interviews is that he returned, towards the end of his life, to what he called hermeneutic sociology. A concept coined in his book *Hermenêutica e Ciência Social: abordagens da compreensão* (2022) from the first phase of his thought originally written in 1978. He argues that sociological hermeneutics is "the postulate that the effort to understand human realities should be made with sociological tools" (Bauman, 2015, p. 57, our translation). This requires:

[...] that whenever we seek the meaning of human thoughts or actions, we must examine the socially configured conditions of the people whose thoughts or actions we intend to understand/explain. In other words, the hermeneutics of human conduct is basically a sociological operation, not semantic or philosophical (2015, p. 57, our translation).

By proposing an intellectual itinerary of Bauman, we seek to engender not only a research tool for investigators interested in his works and his work in general, but we are fulfilling what he taught us.
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