

# The Terrorism of Reason in the Thought of Zygmunt Bauman

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Zygmunt Bauman, a Polish exile of Jewish roots, became Professor of Sociology at the University of Leeds in the early 1970s. Throughout his academic career, he was concerned with the working class and the problematics of culture. He is now regarded as one of the finest writers in the social theory of Modernity and Postmodernity. His work, 'Modernity and the Holocaust' won the European Amalfi Prize for Sociology in 1989. He still writes in retirement; his most recent book is entitled, 'Postmodern Ethics'.

This article is concerned with the social theory of Zygmunt Bauman. It will highlight recurring themes within his writing with particular reference to three of his works, *Legislators and Interpreters*, *Modernity and Ambivalence*, and *Mortality, Immortality and other Life Strategies*.<sup>1</sup> It will trace his argument that Modernity constituted a process of gradual de-animation of Nature and disenchantment of the world, a condition that *post-modernity* aims to reverse. It will discuss his contention about the catastrophic effects of the strategies of instrumental Reason and Modernity's relentless urge to design and order the whole of human existence. It will demonstrate some of the awful consequences of such strategies. The tension between human attempts to structure the world and its self-defeating failures to do so, becomes the central motif in Bauman's work: a tension witnessed most visibly in the on-going confrontation between Reason and ambiguity.

Bauman learned the limitations of structuralism from Levi-Strauss. What fascinated him was the Modern urge to structure everything, the constant attempt to find *the* social structure, *the* underlying structure of everything; that ambivalence could be eliminated. Ambiguity, for Bauman, is the opposite of classification. It entails the possibility of assigning an object or an event to more than one category. It is a problem about the disfunction of language, since it denies that things can be easily set apart, segregated, named, that the world consists of discreet entities, to be neatly apportioned. To classify is to give the

world a structure, to reduce the probable, to behave as if events were not random. It strives for order and consistency in the face of the complexity and randomness of events and situations in everyday life.<sup>2</sup> Disorder and anxiety occur when some of the linguistic tools of classification become strained or redundant. It is, says Bauman, the ideal of classification to arrange things into a sort of 'commodious filing cabinet that contains all the items that the world contains—but confines each and every item within a separate place of its own . . .'.<sup>3</sup> A problem occurs when this filing cabinet is shown not to be able to classify every event in this way. The irony, too, is that the more one pursues this activity, the more ambivalence is revealed to be an inextricable part of its pursuit. The more one attempts to classify everything, the more one is confronted by the impossibility of such a task. Ambivalence, therefore, 'is the side-product of the labour of classification'<sup>4</sup> and its struggle is both self-destructive and propelling, urging one to pursue that which is unobtainable.

Modernity endeavoured to order and classify to a frightening degree. It was a self-conscious flight away from the chaos, contingency and transparency of the world. This, for Bauman, is one of the most significant tasks that Modernity set itself. But much more than this; it allied this enterprise to a process of reflexivity upon this sought-after order. In the process, the discovery of the non-naturalness of order resulted in the acceptance of the Hobbesian view that order had to be created. This is not to suggest, naively, that the premodern was complacent about order. Rather that Modernity became, as Bauman puts it, 'saturated by the "without us"', a deluge feeling'.<sup>5</sup> The characteristic of modernity is that the enterprise did not attempt to discover the order *lying behind* the interruptions of chaos. But rather that it designed what would otherwise not have been there. That is, it invented *the task of designing*, rather than serenely accepting the given order of the world. The consequences were significant: Nature now was something in need of mastery, domination, subjugation, It had to be remade. Order was a thing to be manufactured from the ruins of recalcitrant Nature.

Anxiety and restlessness are the products of this journey since a Sisyphian-like war is waged on the countless local fields that refuse to be constructed out of this falsely-ordained order, under the insidious flag of progress. This is the supreme folly of the dream of Modernity; to suggest that the fragmentation of the world (itself caused by the ordering process) is easily made whole again. As the attempt to problem-solve the fragmentary nature of unclassified territory increases (due to its own attempts, Bauman contends, to drive the relative into the ideology of autarchy), the problems get larger and more diverse. The

drive to designate is a move away from the abhorrence of ambiguity. But as Bauman writes, ' . . . more ambivalence was the ultimate product of modern, fragmented drives to order. Problems were created by problem-solving, since these became the efforts to suppress the 'endemic relativity of autonomy'.<sup>6</sup>

The Enlightenment's attempt to rationalise the whole of human existence resulted in a reductionism which betrayed the grounds on which that project was based. The so-called triumph of instrumental Reason ended in a neurotic and frenzied attempt to classify ceaselessly. Plans were formulated against any attempts to evade this Kafkaesque world of manipulative, bureaucratic scrutiny. Whether (as Bauman suggests), this misguided epistemological approach was partly responsible for the worst atrocities of the twentieth century, or whether a less damning approach can be argued for, is a matter for debate. As Harvey says, 'Which position we take depends upon how we explain the 'dark side' of our recent history and the degree to which we attribute it to the defects of Enlightenment Reason rather than to a lack of proper application'.<sup>7</sup> For Bauman, this 'dark side' was partly the result of the blind application of instrumental Reason. This discussion will focus on the devastating persuasion of Bauman's position.

In 'Ambivalence and Modernity' Bauman pursues the thesis of the Other with particular reference to the stranger. The evil of Nazism was simply one example of the 'deviation-free society' that Modernity (trapped in its post-Enlightenment hubris and self-confidence) would produce. Bauman shows that German National Socialism was only one example of that Modern spirit which crushes any recalcitrant reality which comes in its path of classification. The Other or enemy became dehumanised, beyond redemption, categorised as non-human.

An asymmetrical process comes into being, as individuals delineate who are to be their friends and who their enemies. But, in the process, the relationship between friends and enemies becomes a form of sociation. One defines the Other, is a reflection of the opposite of the one to the Other. As Bauman states, 'Being a friend and being an enemy, are the two modalities in which the Other may be recognised as another subject, construed as a subject like myself, admitted into the self's own world . . .'<sup>8</sup> The stranger is much more of a threat than any socially constructed enemy. S/he is the one who threatens sociation itself, who comes and 'calls the bluff' of the friends/enemy dichotomy, who stays in that space where the map cannot locate her.<sup>9</sup> The stranger, in contrast, is one of those 'undecidables,' one of those who might be friend or enemy or contain an element of both. S/he is neither inside nor outside, but her real potency and potential danger, is located in her

underdetermination.

The hermeneutic problems set up by the stranger destabilise situations, making neat classification a flawed thing. The real monsters are not simply those who are not classified at a certain stage in the process, but those who will perhaps never be. 'They do not question just this one opposition here and now: they question oppositions as such, the very principle of the opposition, the plausibility of dichotomy it suggests and feasibility of separation it demands. They unmask the brittle artificiality of division',<sup>10</sup> concludes Bauman. Not only does this stranger unsettle the moral reasoning of that world, but significantly undermines the spatial ordering of that world in the process, exposing its falsehood and fragility. Like Jesus before Pilate, the Modern, hegemonic world wants to differentiate categorically between friends and enemies, between those who are for and those who are against. 'If you set him free, you are no friend of Caesar's,' shout the crowd. The stranger's irredeemable sin is 'his simultaneous assault on several crucial oppositions instrumental in the incessant effort of ordering'.<sup>11</sup> Quoting Douglas, Bauman reinforces his position: 'any given culture must confront events which seem to defy its assumptions . . . It cannot ignore the anomalies which its scheme produces, except at the risk of forfeiting confidence'.<sup>12</sup> Like Prime Minister John Major, who on 27 May 1994 suggested that beggars were offensive and should be driven off the streets and who exclaimed, 'We have rigorous penalties against begging and I think that we should not shrink from using those penalties,'<sup>13</sup> the march of Modernity administers the social removal and upholds the legal consequences for the stranger, the Other who cannot be categorised. Nevertheless, such strategies simply reveal the mounting neuroses of the classifiers. The victims, by being who they are, the ambivalent strangers—who do no harm to anyone—present the most pressing of oppositions and incur, innocently, the most cruel of penalties.

The question of the subject or elite possessing the knowledge born of that reasoning propensity, becomes crucial in the war against that which needs to be ordered, controlled and made sense of. The iron cage of bureaucratic rationality, most strongly criticised by Weber, becomes *someone's* ordering, a *subject's* rules, which others must obey. And that ordering becomes intolerant, even of the most minute of ambiguities, the most harmless of things that cannot be regulated or classified. Postmodernity's unmasking of the myth of representation partly addresses this dilemma. But Modernity's insistence on social order means that it depends on so little. Once that order depended on religion to preserve a 'sacred canopy' (to use Berger's phrase),<sup>14</sup> under which

stable meanings could be maintained, Now, under the relentless surge of secular, bureaucratic efficiency, 'A hair, literally a hair, lying where it shouldn't, can separate order from disorder. Everything that does not belong where it is is hostile. Even the tiniest thing is disturbing: a man of total order would have to scour his realm with a microscope and even then a remnant of potential nervousness will remain in him'.<sup>15</sup>

Bauman's social analysis of the legacy of Enlightenment thinking centres upon this crucial dialectic between reason and its arch enemy, ambivalence. In *Mortality, Immortality and Other Life Strategies*, he argues that 'Human culture is, on the one hand, a gigantic (and spectacularly successful) ongoing effort to give meaning to human life; on the other hand, it is an obstinate (and somewhat less successful) effort to suppress the awareness of the irreparably surrogate, and brittle character of such meaning'.<sup>16</sup> Death is the subject and central event around which this brittleness is most clearly shown in Bauman's argument. Death is the ultimate defeat of Reason. Humans are distinguished from the animal world by knowing that they know. Yet we cannot know what death is like. And we know that we cannot know. It is the ultimate mystery. Reason, in search of security and precision, faces the Other of death, which defies its all-embracing but fatuous power to understand and rationalise. The individual when attempting to imagine her/his own death, is forced to admit that this is simply a spectator-like experience. Death is the 'scandal', the 'ultimate humiliation of reason'.<sup>17</sup> It saps the trust in reason. In this sense, the horror of death is the horror of not understanding, of not comprehending that which cannot be tamed by Reason. If Reason promised choice, then death denied that choice. Death cannot be avoided. It therefore either becomes a felt anticipation or a sorrowful loss. People deceive in its presence. They behave as if death were not going to happen. This is a remarkable triumph of the will over Reason, contends Bauman, since Reason knows that death cannot be avoided and will come, eventually, to everyone.

A turning away from death, therefore, constitutes the social means of discovering a way to live with death. Reason's inability to find an answer to death results in the social construction of the disbelief of death. This can be self-sustaining as long as it is not too closely inspected, too closely examined. Culture constructs the means of debilitating the gnawing unsettling of death. Social arrangements are lodged in between life and death. As Bauman states, '... societies are arrangements that permit humans to live with weaknesses that would otherwise render life impossible'.<sup>18</sup> The most crucial of such arrangements are those which conceal the 'potentially poisonous effects

of its unconcealed known presence'.<sup>19</sup> Knowing that we know about the fact of death is part of the process of living in a society with a language that attempts to understand and get hold of the uncertain, but it also constitutes part of that selfsame society where attempts are made to repair the damage that has sometimes been done, where ambivalence finds a gap in the otherwise carefully plotted and mapped-out routine of daily life, or where the contingency of life, with a scare, breaks through to the surface, as if to say, don't forget me.

If Hegel suggested that history is what man does with death, then it was the task of culture to 'solidify the contingent, to entrench the rootless, to give the powerless an impression of power, to hide uncontrived absurdity behind contrived meanings'.<sup>20</sup> Culture becomes the counter-mnemo-technic device to forget what we are most aware of. Even if the body becomes the site for the socially constructed fight against the knowability of death, this battle fares no better than that waged on society, since it too becomes a 'monster of ambivalence: half-friend, half-enemy',<sup>21</sup> being both the object and means of the struggle. And even if culture declares a war of attrition on death and ambivalence, it is doomed from the start, since it becomes intent on cutting the 'ambivalent human predicament into a multitude of logically and pragmatically unequivocal situations'.<sup>22</sup> The social consequences can be grave. For survival's sake, a war is pitched on those who threaten survival. National identities become entrenched, national tribal patriotism 'transmutes individual unselfishness into national egoism'.<sup>23</sup> Universalism becomes the tool of exclusion. With left-overs out of the way, an inner circle is left which continues the fight against those outside the camp who need either to be destroyed, converted or possibly allowed in, on asymmetrical terms.

Bauman's analysis of religion's answer to the contingency of existence hinges on the type of society to which it was addressed. There was, writes Bauman nostalgically, a pre-modern timeless world in which 'the timelessness of the religious message chimed well with the stagnant, self-repetitive life of routine'.<sup>24</sup> The form of that world was not open to challenge, the concept of its order a non-existent thing, since it was only Modernity which called it that, 'having eaten the tree of the unexpected and the unfamiliar . . . looking back at what was no more, and with poorly concealed wistful nostalgia'.<sup>25</sup> Any disasters, like the plague, were simply a 'ripple on the eternal sea, temporary disturbance, a momentary departure from the place things have been, and should be again'.<sup>26</sup> With Modernity, in contrast, came the task of imposing meaning on a world which at times seemed to despair of ever finding it. Before this time, religion did not seek to attach meaning to

the world's affairs, since life just was—'as the rest of the world, which only when prodded out of its self-sameness would become an object of anxiety-fed scrutiny'.<sup>27</sup>

Religion was the acceptance of the world as it was—as it was lived—in all its unquestioned givenness. Bauman continues, 'One does not demand that the obvious should justify itself'.<sup>28</sup> Modernity, on the other hand, made the meaning of life a daily task, a chore to be done, a search to be commenced. Once the questions began to be asked, then religion seemed in peril—it only remained effective as long as the questions remained silent. The enterprise now became a human one, endowed with a secular mission, born of free-will, to make sense of the seemingly meaningless, as the interruptions to the routine of ordinary life loomed large against the skyline. The ordering and meaning of the world was now in the hands of man.

In chapter four of 'Legislators and Interpreters,' Bauman uses again the metaphor of the gardener to describe the task of Modernity, in contrast to that of the game-keeper to describe the pre-modern. The role of the gardener is essentially different. Previously the gamekeeper was, by nature, a religious person, modestly content to ensure that the plants and animals self-reproduce and happy to trust the resourcefulness of the trustees: gamekeepers are not great believers in the capacity of humans to administer their own life. They do not fashion and pattern the ways of nature to their own ends, but rather are content to accept the modest claims of humanity in the face of Nature and the Providence of God. The shift from a traditional way of doing things to a self-conscious task was due not only, says Bauman, to the invention of this gardening-like activity, but had been set off by the 'incapacity of the wild culture to sustain its own balance . . . by the disturbing disequilibrium between the volume of gamekeepers' demands and the productive capability of their trustees'.<sup>29</sup> But the cracks in the wild culture saw to it that the new legislators secured the boundaries and erected the fences against the irrational and passion-filled appetites of the lower and uneducated populace. Bauman again uses the word 'brittleness' to describe that crucial destabilising effect of interruptions and ambiguities in the daily round of life, that feeling that things 'fall apart at the centre'. The very discovery of principles (now seemingly fragile) on which human life was based quaked under the full force of their own uncertainty and contingency. Things began to occur which were not anticipated. As Bauman suggests, ' . . . once a society without design started producing, on a massive scale, phenomena it did not anticipate and could not control, it was possible to ask about the real or ideal principles which had been breached, and any remedy proposed for the regrettable effects



of such a break . . .'.<sup>30</sup>

One overriding consequence of this split between nature and social order was that a social contract had to be put in place, a means for regulating that frightening ambiguity and uncertainty that modernity had discovered and now set about taming and classifying. The legislator, the design-drawing despot, emerged as the hero of this new social order that had to be drawn up. Reason fought its war against the wayward passions of man, against the illiterate and uneducated, against those localised communities that were regulated by their own sense of time, place and destiny. There was a plot to be turned over by this newly-found efficiency of the gardening state, by those who knew better, by, in part, the church who now built fences around their own privileged churches and cemeteries. This was the time when the clergy joined forces with the secularisers and trimmed the lawns of respectability and elitist education. The orderly society, the world of better men, the designated spaces of civilisation, were to be managed in the most efficient (and intolerant) of ways. This was the time when the 'highly intellectualized and abstract religion of the theologians'<sup>31</sup> dominated the unrefined passions and simplicity of belief of the illiterate. This was the age when the parish priests and parish churches withdrew from the local communities and presided over a far superior theology, when they undertook the pastoral welfare of those who knew no better. This was the time when the traditional football match played every year at Whitsun on the streets of Derby came to be regarded as a 'disgraceful and inhuman exhibition . . . a scene worthier of pagan Rome than Christian Britain,'<sup>32</sup> when hired organists replaced popular orchestras from their churches and when the police state was in the making. High and low culture had been constructed and made its way, unrelentingly, once the gardening had begun. Bauman ends his chapter by lamenting that 'the traditional, self-managing and self-reproducing culture was in ruins'.<sup>33</sup> The result was that a culture had been born which had become conscious of itself and divisive in its management. All in the name of progress and social order.

In *Mortality, Immortality and Other Life Strategies*, Bauman exposes the Faustian man in all his brutal and yet subtle power, epitomised in the constitution of the national state. His chapter entitled 'The Selfish Species' contains the most radical expose of Modernity's gardening proclivity. Here power-assisted universality was to become the goal of Modernity's erasure of the diverse and different. Uniformity was to reign as an indication of social order and success. There was a 'call for unconditional and uncontested subordination to the power of the supra-communal state, which had now been juxtaposed, as the



epitome of universality, to communally based parochiality'.<sup>34</sup> Such conquests were described as conquests of liberation. Now the imparting of beliefs, constructed and disguised as education, was coolly administered. Identities had to be forged out of the bureaucratisation of this national state, which left little room for disagreement. Meaning was now to be given as a gift to those who were in need and would appreciate it. Thus started the formation of the masses, and the imposed monopoly of an education by the experts, the elite, the masters of Reason. The Renaissance 'chain of being' with its divisions and subdivisions, was now to be replaced by an amorphous group of the masses defined by the elite. The children of light were now opposed to those of the dark, reason waged a war on superstition, law and order regulated the way things ought to be in a civilised society.

The Enlightenment had produced the signs of a totalitarian state, repressive and divisive. The elite now held the sway on what constituted meaning. It was their meaning, their methods either entailing the close control of conduct backed up by confinement (as vividly described by Foucault),<sup>35</sup> or by legitimisation. This entailed the organisation of collective repression by the representation of order as order itself; thus was born the rise of nationalism, being the most effective and collective form of political organisation. In the process, the bid for territory ensued. As Bauman says, 'Drawing the boundary between the natives and the aliens, between the prospective nation and its enemies, was an inseparable part of the self-assertion of the national elite'.<sup>36</sup> This is why Bauman has no hesitation in calling nationalism the racism of the intellectuals.<sup>37</sup> Vigilance then became the ever-present task of nationalism, lest someone promised to unsettle that universalising it so desperately needed for its own survival. Ambiguity and the stranger were its most disturbing and unsettling components, and in its pursuit of its goal, it 'prompts feverish defence of the soil and frantic blood-testing, it creates the state of permanent tension it claims to relieve'.<sup>38</sup> Its strength depends on the connecting role it plays in the promotion and perpetuation of the social order which it so carefully defines.

Friends, as a result, (as opposed to enemies), are artificially constructed into an imagined community of national commonality. Nationalism redefines friends as natives. It engages in the propaganda of so-called shared values and attitudes; it promotes joint historical memories. It preaches a sermon of common fate and common destiny. Nationalism, states Bauman, is the church which forces the prospective flock to practice the cult.

It was, from the start, involved in the 'role of the collective

gardener and set about the task of cultivating sentiments and skills otherwise unlikely to grow'.<sup>39</sup> If the task was to be completed there would be no strangers left at the end. As it happened, strangers refused to be split into the us and them of national segregation. With every increased attempt to assimilate them, it simply reinforced their presence and distinction.

Bauman also focuses his attention on some of the personal and psychological repercussions of this type of will to domination. The social consequences were the inevitable result of the emergence of a conditioned, modern spirit that suffered from its own neurotic struggle to free itself from the unanswerability of life. One of the worst legacies of the Enlightenment myth was that it left the individual alone, anxious and selfish, laments Bauman. That condition was hatched in the trough of anxious yearnings to understand and get hold of the world in all its unexpectedness. Bauman writes that one of the most painful prices humanity paid for the comforts of modernity was the discovery of the absurdity and loneliness of being.<sup>40</sup> It became an existence without a script written in advance, a stage set for actors whose action could never be foretold. Vatican Council II likewise spoke of modern man's plight as one of ceaseless yearning and questioning. Modern man is 'torn by a welter of anxieties he is compelled to choose between and repudiate some among them'.<sup>41</sup> And later it speaks of this plight as being amongst some, 'whose hopes are set on a genuine and total emancipation of mankind through human effort alone and look forward to some future earthly paradise where all the desires of their hearts will be fulfilled'.<sup>42</sup>

Bauman discusses how the site for transcendence came to be understood to reside in the human partnership of love. 'It is now the partner in love that is expected to offer the space for transcendence, *to be* the transcendence. My own self . . . is to acquire a vicarious immortality by sundering its private bond and being set free'. It might then gain a new, unbound and more credible existence within the trans-individual 'universe of two'.<sup>43</sup> But this false dream becomes equally brittle, since 'my stakes in immortality have been invested in another mortal creature, and this latter fact cannot be concealed for long by even the most passionate deification of the partner'.<sup>44</sup>

Other attempts to stem the surge of anxious thoughts and yearnings are located in the promise of a better future but the Modern mode denies the past its ultimate meaning-given authority and hands over the right to assign meanings to an unknown and uncertain future. But this is a foolish task since 'it is precisely the endemic inconclusivity of effort'<sup>45</sup> that produces the restlessness. Modernity becomes obsessive because it

'never gets enough . . . its ambitions frustrated'.<sup>46</sup> The worst tragedy of all is that 'modernity becomes branded with a contradiction it cannot wash off: it divides when dreaming of unification . . . since in the attempt of power-assisted action to universalise, the carrying power can never reach beyond its own carrying capacity and as a result, only secures new divisions and separations'.<sup>47</sup>

It is not difficult to see why Bauman regards Levinas as the greatest moral philosopher of the twentieth century and how his own depiction of Modernity manifests the absence of the type of moral responsibility Levinas envisages as the only true morality. Ethics is not about being with each other in a reciprocating sociality of sameness, where one engages only with those that one can understand or feel some connection to. Ethical responsibility is about being *for the other*. Ethics does not rest on rationality but precedes it. Addressing the alterity of the Other, in all its difference, constitutes ethical responsibility. Meaning is born out of this move toward the Other in all its ambivalence and indefinability. This calls for 'an abdication of sovereignty in the face of the other, responsibility for the Other stops the meaningless, rumbling clamour . . . This concern fills the emptiness of contingency'.<sup>48</sup>

This move toward the Other is altering, however, through Modernity's strainer of social order. This strainer has done its job well since that better ethics, which precedes sociality, is disturbingly absent. Bauman quotes from Levinas' thesis: 'It is extremely important to know if society in the current sense of the term is the result of the limitation of the principle that men are predators of one another, or if to the contrary it results from the limitation of the principle that men are for one another. Does the social, with its institutions, universal forms and laws, result from limiting the consequences of the war between men, or from limiting the infinity which opens in the ethical relationship of man to man?'<sup>49</sup>

Unfortunately, Modernity's social manipulation of this 'infinity' is based on 'the existence which is *not* being for'.<sup>50</sup> But the space that Modernity relentlessly attempts to fill reflects a false dream. Lifelong exertion of this kind can do nothing but create more uncertainty. Modernity has ushered in a new slavery; life is now a lonely pursuit. The inalienable response of the individual is reduced to a lonely voice facing a lonely death. Caustically Bauman concludes, 'Unless I do something to change all this: to force others to be for me as staunchly as I refused to be for them'.<sup>51</sup>

This is the telling paradox. The social forms and manipulations of Modernity only extend the existential anguish (created, for example, by the sequestration of death) and the refusal to be for the Other. Sociality

makes a pariah of the self since it cannot be for others, only for those who are a reflection of its own self in relation to the Other. In Modernity's futile endeavour to locate ethical action within an inner circle, demarcated by mathematical reasoning, nation from nation, friend from foe, stranger from native, me from you, Modernity sinks into an ideology of pretentious but highly dangerous social practices. Conversely, for Levinas (and indeed for Bauman), it is the answerability to the Other, the 'pre-ontological and pre-intellectual relationship which already contains the "for": I being for the other,' that makes one an individual.<sup>52</sup> This is a journey to the unknown, like Abraham who leaves his fatherhood in search of the unknown land. Death, for Levinas, is the experience of something which is absolutely Other. For Heidegger there was a rationale to death, since we are beings who achieve authenticity in its presence. But as Loughlin suggests, 'Levinas opposes an ontological subjectivity which 'reduces everything to itself', in favour of an ethical subjectivity which 'kneels before the other sacrificing its own liberty to the primordial call of the other'.<sup>53</sup> This is not the call born of Reason, or a relationship of mutual reciprocity. This is not the Kantian dictate of universal reason or a Heideggerian definition of Being. It is a *command* that falls upon the individual, a slap in the face of reason, reflecting an almost Biblical urgency of call. Levinas had no qualms about locating God within this ethical perspective.

For some, Bauman's thesis might seem too much like a 'grand narrative' of the disturbing consequences of terroristic Reason, too broad and sweeping in its connections and conclusions. If this is the case, then he will clearly become the scourge of many post-modernist thinkers who pour scorn on such attempts. For others, like myself, Bauman has investigated, with devastating consistency, the role that instrumental Reason has assumed in Modernity and located its terrifying consequences within social and political practices.

- 1 Bauman, Z. *Legislators and Interpreters*. (Polity Press, 1987)  
*Modernity and Ambivalence*. (Polity Press, 1991).  
*Mortality, Immortality and Other Life Strategies*. (Polity Press, 1992).
- 2 Bauman, Z. *Modernity and Ambivalence*. Op. cit. See *The Introduction: The Quest for Order*. pp. 1–17.
- 3 *ibid.* p. 2.
- 4 *ibid.* p. 3.
- 5 *ibid.* p. 7.
- 6 *ibid.* p. 14.
- 7 Harvey, D. *The Condition of Postmodernity*. (Blackwell, 1990) p. 14.
- 8 Bauman, Z. *Modernity and Ambivalence*. Op. cit. p. 54.
- 9 *ibid.* p. 55.
- 10 *ibid.* p. 58–59.

- 11 *ibid.* p. 60.
- 12 *ibid.* p. 6. quoting Douglas, M. *Purity and Danger*. (Routledge. 1966) p. 39.
- 13 *The Independent*. May 28. 1994.
- 14 Berger, P *The Sacred Canopy*. (Doubleday/Anchor.1990)
- 15 Bauman, Z. *Mortality, Immortality and Other Life Strategies*. Op. cit. p. 113.
- 16 *ibid.* p. 8.
- 17 *ibid.* p. 15.
- 18 *ibid.* p. 17.
- 19 *ibid.* p. 18.
- 20 *ibid.* pp. 22–23.
- 21 *ibid.* p. 36.
- 22 *ibid.* p. 38.
- 23 *ibid.* p. 39. quoting from Niebuhr, N. *Moral Man and Immoral Society*. (New York. 1948) p. 91.
- 24 *ibid.* p. 91.
- 25 *ibid.* p. 91.
- 26 *ibid.* p. 91.
- 27 *ibid.* p. 92.
- 28 *ibid.* p. 92.
- 29 *Interpreters and Legislators*. Op. cit. p. 52.
- 30 *ibid.* See Ch.4.
- 31 *ibid.* p. 63.
- 32 *ibid.* p. 65. quoting Delves, A. 'Popular Recreations and Social Conflict in Derby 1800–1850.', in Yeo, E&S. *Popular Culture and Class Conflict 1590–1914: Explorations in the History of Labour and Leisure*. (Harvester. 1981) pp. 90–95.
- 33 *ibid.* p. 67.
- 34 Bauman, Z. *Immortality, Mortality and Other Life Strategies*. Op. cit p. 98.
- 35 See Foucault, M. *Power and Knowledge*. (New York. 1984)
- 36 Bauman, Z. *Mortality, Immortality and Other Life Strategies*. Op. cit. p. 106.
- 37 *ibid.* p. 109.
- 38 *ibid.* p. 113.
- 39 Bauman, Z. *Modernity and Ambivalence*. Op. cit. p. 64.
- 40 *ibid.* See 'The loneliness of terror'. pp. 48–50.
- 41 Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. Ch. 10. in Flannery, A. ed. *Vatican Council II*. (Dublin. 1975).
- 42 *ibid.* Ch. 10.
- 43 Bauman, Z. *Mortality, Immortality and other Life Strategies*. Op. cit. p. 28.
- 44 *ibid.* p. 29.
- 45 Bauman, Z. *Modernity and Ambivalence*. Op. cit. p. 10.
- 46 *ibid.* p. 10.
- 47 *ibid.* p. 112.
- 48 Bauman, Z. *Mortality, Immortality and Other Life Strategies*. Op. cit. p. 42.
- 49 *ibid.* p. 48.
- 50 *ibid.* p. 49.
- 51 *ibid.* p. 50
- 52 *ibid.* p. 42.
- 53 *New Blackfriars*. Jan. 1994. Loughlin, G. 'Other Discourses', p. 22.