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# The Dogs Bark, the Carnival Moves On... Revisiting Zygmunt Bauman, Modernity and the Holocaust

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**Abstract:** *Modernity and the Holocaust* is now thirty years old. How should we respond to the book, its controversy, and its history or context? In this essay I offer three steps as a way into this labyrinth. First, I review the core claims of Bauman's book (1989). Second, I use my four-volume edited collection of essays on his work (2002) as a decade check on its reception. Third, the new volume, *Revisiting Modernity and the Holocaust: Heritage, Dilemmas, Extensions* (2022) is brought into play as a third optic or time slice. I conclude that the book is a classic, which means we should still read it and use it as a marker, but also that the debate has out of necessity moved on. As Bauman used to say, "The dogs bark, the carnival moves on".

**Keywords:** Zygmunt Bauman; Holocaust; modernity; Janina Bauman; text; context

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How are we to appraise, or place Bauman's *Modernity and the Holocaust* after 30 years? Is it a classic, or a catalyst? At first controversial, its theses came to be conventional. These days hardly anyone would blink at its hypotheses. What are we to learn from this, both about the book and ourselves?

In this essay I follow three steps. First, I revisit the text itself, for there is always abundant room for misunderstanding, misrepresentation and reduction. These processes are normal, if ultimately unhelpful. Second, I introduce some of the resources provided by my own four-volume edited collection from 2002, *Masters of Social Thought – Zygmunt Bauman* (Beilharz, 2002). This gives a time slice-like sense of the earlier responses, before the dust had settled. Third, I use the materials in the new volume edited by Jack Palmer and Dariusz Brzeziński, *Revisiting Modernity and the Holocaust: Heritage, Dilemmas, Extensions* (Palmer & Brzeziński, 2022), to sample the present state of the art in Bauman reception now. Approaching Bauman's book through these three moments: 1989, 2002, and 2022, may offer some sense of how to begin to place this text into context.

## 1

What did Zygmunt Bauman have to say? We need to commence from the task that an author sets for themselves. Bauman may have become idiosyncratic in his later writ-

ing, but here the logic is clear: Modernity and the Holocaust, not the other way around. While it is clear that Bauman wanted to foreground the Holocaust, the real object of his concern, one thing leading to another, was the broad field of modernity itself. Other issues follow: what was his style, and who was he addressing?

The early, and Polish Bauman was given more to systematicity in his writing, up to and including at least say *Hermeneutics and Social Science* (Z. Bauman, 1978). His style became progressively more essayistic, following Montaigne and then his not so secret hero, Simmel. Famously, *Modernity and the Holocaust* begins with the prompting provided by Janina Bauman in *Winter in the Morning*. But where Janina's book is a testimonial, a truthful account, Zygmunt's book is a portal, first into centring the Holocaust as an issue for sociology, and second, to employing the Holocaust as an optic into modernity itself. His book pivots between these two key terms, but its logic is to enter into the heart of modernity as the precondition for the Holocaust, its vital condition of existence. His mission is to balance "Never Again!" with "Always Possible!" All this is already made clear in the Preface – it is the task that he sets himself, to puzzle over the Holocaust, but also to connect it to mass production and destruction, bureaucracy, and the prospect of rationalized killing. One tendency in the book's reception, of course, was the reduction of the argument to one of its claims; for example, that bureaucracy was to blame for the Holocaust. Bauman had been trained in the continental tradition of sociology, taking philosophy and ethics seriously, but he also set out from the standard social science working premise of the multivariate. Whenever something interesting or awful occurs, there is bound to be a plurality of factors involved in the construction of any possible explanation. So he writes that

[...] the Holocaust was an outcome of a unique encounter between factors themselves quite ordinary and common, and that the possibility of such an encounter could be blamed to a very large extent on the emancipation of the political state, with its monopoly of means of violence and its audacious engineering ambitions, from social control – following the step-by-step dismantling of all non-political power resources and institutions of social self-management. (Z. Bauman, 1989, p. xiii)

Or to put it this way:

I propose to treat the Holocaust as a rare, yet significant and reliable, test of the hidden possibilities of modern society. (Z. Bauman, 1989, p. 12)

What then follows is both systematic and surprising. Chapter 1, the Introduction, makes clear its addressee – sociologists. Not historians, who had been working in this field with diligence for decades, or anthropologists, who were yet to arrive. So Bauman is not claiming to add anything new in terms of fresh archival research, or new materials except those that are lateral ways of thinking. Sociology, here, may well be part of the problem. Sociology has too often been in service of the state, and not only in Nazi Germany. For his part, Bauman had already taken a stand against managerial sociology. This was one purpose of the book called *Towards a Critical Sociology* (Z. Bauman, 1976).

The non-Jewish Jew also wanted to be the non-sociological sociologist. Nevertheless Bauman is clear about the limits of his critical claims. The Holocaust is not the truth of modernity, but one possibility in it (Z. Bauman, 1989, p. 6). Again, with precision: “Modern civilization was not the Holocaust’s *sufficient* condition; it was, however, most certainly its *necessary* condition” (Z. Bauman, 1989, p. 13).

Chapters 2 and 3 open onto themes of modernity, racism, and extermination. This suggests a new prospect, leading in the direction of a sociology of the Other. The story does not stop at modernity, however defined. The antimodernist phobias of the Nazis were central, as they could now be unloaded through the channels of modernity (Z. Bauman, 1989, p. 46). But racism was modern, in the sense that it concerns us here, even if elimination of the Jews became a synonym for the rejection of modern order (Z. Bauman, 1989, p. 61). This was a door opened earlier by Jeffrey Herf, in his 1984 study *Reactionary Modernism*. Reaction and modernity were all mixed up. Racism involves estrangement, but also social engineering; in short, for Bauman, exterminatory anti-Semitism is a thoroughly modern phenomenon (Z. Bauman, 1989, p. 73).

Chapter 4 takes on the uniqueness and normality of the Holocaust. Bauman discusses a key anxiety of critical theory – the prospect of the latent totalitarianism of the field we call modernity, its apparent irreversibility as a dominant trend. Where is the modern society that has no totalitarian impulses, forces or agents? Bureaucracy cannot think for itself; its logic is to follow orders, in this case those of the Nazis, i.e. the state. Chapter 5 enters the controversy concerning the cooperation of the victims, the *Judenraete*, and the figure of Rumkowski. This is one of the most hotly contested issues in Bauman’s work, as we will see below.

It is interesting to note that this chapter is part of the book which may be viewed as an assemblage, pre-published like chapter 4 and confirming, as in a different way with the inclusion of chapter 6 on the Milgram Experiments, that the structure of the book is lateral and not always predictable, yet serving Bauman’s purpose. Chapter 7 then enters realms of conformism, the thinking of Levinas, then seen as some kind of helpmate, those issues of distance, the absence of proximity and the face of the other. Chapter 8, the afterthought, takes on Lanzmann’s *Shoah* and the theme anticipated by Janina in her book, the dehumanization of the victims.

The structure of the book is not entirely predictable. There were other laterals as well; in order to understand *Modernity and the Holocaust* it was necessary to read *Modernity and Ambivalence* as the route of *Modernity and the Holocaust* leads into *Modernity and Ambivalence*, not least with reference to the *Ostjuden* (Z. Bauman, 1991). Reading Bauman means reading sideways. In other words, you could say skip Milgram and Zimbardo, if you were reading it for the Holocaust, and rather enter the subject through *Winter in the Morning* (J. Bauman, 1985) and *Modernity and Ambivalence* instead. There were things in *Modernity and the Holocaust* that did not strictly belong there, such as Milgram, and other things that would have to be found elsewhere, in other texts alto-

gether. There is a point here about the work of the reader and that of the writer. Like other interesting thinkers, Bauman sometimes offers hints rather than strong elaborations. The work of theory, and of interpretation is not an Ikea project: you need to work at it, as a reader, and the model may be more like that of the workshop, the process of reading being as incomplete as that of life itself.

## 2

In 2000 I published my first book on Bauman, *Zygmunt Bauman: Dialectic of Modernity* (Beilharz, 2000b) echoing the German translation of Bauman's Holocaust book and Adorno and Horkheimer's precedents. In my book I scanned all the English-language work of Bauman then available, introducing *Modernity and the Holocaust* as among other things an examination of murderous Fordism (Beilharz, 2000b, p. 91). This book led to another, *The Bauman Reader*, which also appeared in 2000 (Beilharz, 2000a) and included the first chapter of *Modernity and the Holocaust* as well as "A Century of Camps?" from *Life in Fragments* (Z. Bauman, 1995) and Bauman's review of the Feher-Heller-Márkus classic *Dictatorship Over Needs* (1983), itself a parallel text to Bauman's, in this case on Soviet-type modernity. Next in turn came the four-volume edited collection. My research assistants helped me assemble the best of the reviews then available, though it is likely that present retrieval devices would now deliver many more.

I included a section covering some 75 pages on Janina Bauman in the four-volume collection, as it had become clear to me, among others, that there would be no understanding of Zygmunt without Janina. I discussed this issue in advance in *Dialectic of Modernity*, insisting that to encounter *Modernity and the Holocaust* it was first necessary to read the work of Janina Bauman. Chapter 4 of my book, "The Holocaust and the Perfect Order", begins with several pages of discussion especially of *Winter in the Morning*, a book "impossible to summarise in its pathos and persistence". I published two of Janina's best papers in our journal *Thesis Eleven* in 1998 and 2002 (J. Bauman, 1998, 2002), and then a special section of the journal on her death in 2011 (*Thesis Eleven*, 70, 2011). I had hitherto been working on an unfinished project called *Radical Companions*, on couples: the Webbs, Woolves, Coles, Pember Reeveses, in Australia Vance and Nettie Palmer. I had been much influenced by another couple, Feher and Heller. I was intrigued by how such couples worked, what was spoken and what may forever remain unspoken between them, what their emotional division of labour (Heller) might be, inasmuch as you could tell. Then I met Janina and Zygmunt, together in Leeds, in 1990 (Beilharz, 2020a, pp. 29–32). They came as a team, though they were clearly also independent. Not, as was cruelly said of the Webbs, two typewriters clicking as one (Beilharz & Nyland, 1998).

It seemed apparent that hers was the secret to Zygmunt's book, though the two works and the two writers were also radically distinct. Intellectual couples brought different things to a relationship, whether they co-wrote or not. Individuals bring different personalities and skillsets to their projects. Zygmunt had already signalled his debt in his book. Janina's voice is personal and direct, written without self pity. Zygmunt's is political, but primarily professional, in a particular sense: it is an intervention into the discipline of sociology. I was concerned to insist, as I do above, that *Modernity and the Holocaust* was based on a multivariate approach. As Bauman maintains, it was a concatenation of forces that made the Holocaust possible. I referred to the logic of his case, among other things, as a critique of murderous Fordism, a regime of mass production applied to mass destruction. The precedent for Fordism was in the abattoirs of Chicago, a point not lost on writers such as J. M. Coetzee. The idea had some impact; George Ritzer asked me to write an essay out of it, later published as "McFascism?" (Beilharz, 1999). This was, necessarily, to indicate focus on the Holocaust as a modern organizational phenomenon, the institutions, the sites, the trains, the tracks, the timetables, the ticketing and billing, the files and paper trails, the chemicals, the shoes, the architects and so on. The interest in the Holocaust from below was to follow, and it is a vital dimension essentially beyond his optic at this point. Bauman's interest was Weberian, but also primarily cultural; his was, I have suggested, an interest in the irrationality of rationality. This was indicated not only by the attention given to the dynamics of bureaucratization or rationalization, but also by the focus on the state and its legitimate monopoly of violence, in social engineering, in the Holocaust as a process driven from above. The dialectic of modernity, like the dialectic of enlightenment, turned back on itself. The pursuit of a particular rationality itself became irrational. The argument of Bauman was powerfully pitched, but it was not new and it was not original or driven by new data. Its impact was due to his will to connect modernity and the Holocaust.

For the four volumes we assembled the best of available materials responding to Bauman's work. We settled on forty reviews or engagements with *Modernity and the Holocaust* in its first ten years since publication, also including seven pieces on or by Janina, on the same principle: if you want to understand Zygmunt, you need first to read Janina Bauman. This was a view that I reiterated at any given opportunity, for example ten years later in an essay on Bauman for Ritzer's two-volume *Companion to Major Social Theorists* (Beilharz, 2011). There I wrote that there "remains one especially privileged line of access" to Zygmunt's work, which is to be found in Janina's two volumes and their hybrid combination in *Between These Walls* (Beilharz, 2011, p. 172). As Walter Benjamin was given to suggest in another register, it would be here that we might find the spark of hope as well as the stark power of testament. The relationship between Janina and Zygmunt may well, finally, have been more thoroughly contextual than literally textual; perhaps a matter rather of elective affinities. Whatever the case, she was a remarkable writer (Beilharz & Supski, 2011; Wolff, 2011).

Who read *Winter in The Morning*? Not so many, if the period reviews are any indication, though they include contributions from Carole Angier and Patrick Wright. We all read Virago Press, including in Melbourne, in any case. Meantime, Zygmunt was awarded the Amalfi Prize for his attack on sociology and modernity. These were very different books, written in different styles or genres, pitched to different fields and addressees. The views on *Modernity and the Holocaust* were, however, always divided, even as the prize was conferred upon it. The mere conjunction of those two words was seen by some as an offence, as inflammatory.

A common conversational or corridor view at the time of the publication of *Modernity and the Holocaust* was that Bauman was a bit mad, or at least extreme in his views on the modern, or at the very least too romantic or nostalgic for ways of life before the modern. Put bluntly, there was a sense that he was befouling the west's civilizational nest, for surely the legacy of modernity was still that of the enlightenment, progress and the radiant future only momentarily sullied by the relapse represented by Nazi barbarism. Bauman's view may have been that the fact of the Holocaust was exceptional, but that such possibilities were latent in modernity. Several reviews in my collection were keen to argue that Bauman blamed the Holocaust on modernity. Blame, I think he would have agreed, is a charge that should rather be brought against social actors. Modernity was not to blame, but it provided the field which contained the conditions of this possibility.

The Germans meantime were busy with their own self criticism. Yet Hans Joas was first among them to announce that *Modernity and the Holocaust* hit German debate like a bolt of lightning (Beilharz, 2002, vol. 2, p. 3). As Joas reported, the most frequent criticism of Bauman was that he failed to analyse the processes leading to the so-called Final Solution, and to describe the cumulative radicalization of the Nazi regime in this respect (Beilharz, 2002, vol. 2, p. 5). Joas was to follow with his own study, *War and Modernity* (Joas, 2003), which in turn led to my *Socialism and Modernity* (Beilharz, 2009). In the USA some critics like those associated with the journal *Telos* were taken with the echo of the Frankfurt School theme that all modernities contained totalitarian imperatives (Beilharz, 2002, ch. 30). Others sought to connect Bauman and Elias' *Civilizing Process*. Perhaps the most generative engagements were those writings which extended Bauman's interests and those of others into the realms of geopolitics. The Thousand Year Reich was primarily a product of geopolitics, as well as a utopia: it was a demography. It was an aspirant Empire based on Nazi biopolitics. This way of thinking would necessitate the analysis not only of maps or cartographies, but also of floorplans of the camps and their networked interconnections (Beilharz, 2002, ch. 34). Others indicated the absence of women as a major lacuna in Bauman's purview, this anticipating the later response that the view from above, the critique of Nazi state violence, was conducted at the expense of the view from below. Nazism also very clearly involved sexual politics, and was a project of the emotions (Beilharz, 2002, ch. 35). An absence across

many of these competing views was another lightning bolt, Theweleit's *Male Fantasies* (1987). There was so much more to be said (and see Morgan, 2012).

Bauman's interest was, however, consistent with precedents in his work that suggested what I called a sociology of surplus populations (Beilharz, 2010b). This ran from his earliest work on the labour movement, those masses driven into formative cities like Manchester, 'masterless men' and their families. Forced migration is a thread running through his work, as well as his life. The nomads and vagrants of emergent modernity from enclosure lead onto globalization and the plight of refugees today. As he put it acutely in one study, these were *Wasted Lives* (Z. Bauman, 2003). Forced mobility and the camps became permanent features of the modern landscape. The Nazis reclaimed some peoples and expelled others, devouring or vomiting up their victims, as Bauman following Levi-Strauss came graphically to say.

There were broader disciplinary shifts in motion in response to these changes. Several of the pieces gathered for the four-volume set are involved in the shift from Holocaust Studies to Genocide Studies, and indeed any fuller assessment of the limits of *Modernity and the Holocaust* would do well to reassess the state of play in Holocaust Studies at the time Bauman wrote. One view would be that Holocaust Studies was still emergent in 1989, the field in universities then still dominated by historians and Jewish studies. Prominent among many emerging in the field of Genocide Studies was Dirk Moses, here represented in the four-volume collection by an early paper engaging critically with Bauman and Omer Bartov. For Moses, Bauman's emphasis is seen to rest too heavily on universals of modern violence, such as the culture of instrumental reason and bureaucratization, and to deal too lightly with the central issue of anti-Semitism, as emphasized especially at that moment by Goldhagen in *Hitler's Willing Executioners* (Beilharz, 2002, ch. 44). It is a view that follows, in this way, the argument of Dominick La Capra (Beilharz, 2002, ch. 46). Bauman had left too much out. There was so much work yet to be done.

### 3

Certainly it is now routine to focus on the dark sides of modernity since 1492. By the time of writing, today, Holocaust Studies may even have been eclipsed by Genocide Studies. The latter field had expanded to the extent that even it is suffering some identity crises, or deeper issues of reach and definition.

Moreover, there is a proliferation of work across the disciplines, and a wider interest in state violence as well as mass violence or the project of 'permanent security' (see Moses, 2021; Moses & Bloxham, 2010). Within Genocide Studies there are concerns that as the fields have expanded historically and geographically their definition has also

become diluted. This is a more common story about intellectual history. Intellectual expansion and dilution often go together.

A useful measure of the state of affairs with reference to *Modernity and the Holocaust* today is offered by Jack Palmer and Dariusz Brzeziński's new volume (Palmer & Brzeziński, 2022). This book brings together chapters by Larry Ray, Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, Dominic Williams, Maria Ferenc, Paweł Michna, Arne Vetlesen, Jack Palmer, Lydia Bauman, Izabela Wagner, Griselda Pollock, Jonathon Catlin, Max Silverman and Bryan Cheyette. It is a volume that will become a standard reference in itself. For the best question to ask of Bauman's book is what follows?; what comes next?

What are the tasks this particular book sets itself? They are many and varied, as are the contributors themselves. Thirty years on the field is busy. As the editors show in their introduction, Bauman's book was a turning point, both for himself and for his field. Palmer follows among others Ray and Bauer, and their insistence that Bauman's book is weak on the middle range. This is to remind us that the book is not ethnographical, but disciplinary – sociological – and working at the meta level. Bauman's book is a sociological intervention, which also serves as an autocritique, a *mea culpa*. Though it takes book form, it also has the style of the *essai*, which was increasingly to become Bauman's métier as he stepped further away from the academy. There is some wild fire here. Tokarska-Bakir accuses Bauman of being ignorant of anthropology, and claims that he only read theory (Tokarska-Bakir, 2022, p. 41). This is to overlook what I have called elsewhere the Anthropological Imagination in Bauman's thinking, as well as his endless excursions into literature (Beilharz, 2010a, 2010b). It is true that *Modernity and the Holocaust* is not thick description, but this is not the task Bauman sets himself, and if he had a favoured anthropologist, it would be Levi-Strauss or Mary Douglas, perhaps Paul Radin or later Girard rather than Geertz. If Bauman is generally thought to be Weberian in approach, however, it might also be useful to align him with the *Verstehende Soziologie* in Weber, which runs parallel to hermeneutics. The Weberian stream also indicates something that his critics often misread – modernity and tradition are not periods any more than the postmodern is a period. These are always already mixed up, this being the nature of the argument for ideal types and their formal limits; in the real world everything is all mixed up, this not least in phenomena such as Nazism.

Over the last generation there has been a generalized shift in the direction of the view from below, toward agency and resistance. It began earlier, in women's and labour history, and in the interest in everyday life and its history, so-called private life and *Alltagsgeschichte*. The Final Solution from above is now qualified by the view of the Holocaust by Bullets, the enthusiastic grass roots ranks of bloodthirsty Jewhunters of the *Judenjagt*, the murderous local anti-Semitism, and its reliance on the hardest of emotions, ethnic hatred and cruelty (Williams, 2022). Either Bauman is wrong about the cult of reason and rationality, or else his work is in need of serious supplements. In either case there is serious need for review and revision. Ferenc seeks to shed new light



and reformulate Bauman's argument; we could also say Bauman's question, as he wanted to insist on the importance always of the question rather than the answers. Michna works text together with the visual archive. The use of Lodz Labour Department albums offers incredibly powerful work on photomontage, indicating a different version of the Nazi cult of work making you free. Vetlesen discusses the case of Bosnia: Never Again! = Again! foregrounding cruelty, "surplus cruelty" and its foundation in sadism. Jack Palmer adds to this his analysis of Rwanda and the basis of its murders in proximity, familiarity with the victims, and direct responsibility for personal violence. Its analogue in our direct field is Jan Gross's, *Neighbours* (Gross, 2000/2001). Tokarska-Bakir uses historical texts and examples to remind just how viscerally violent earlier anti-Semites were; and also reminds that this microhistorical approach largely postdates the publication of *Modernity and the Holocaust* in 1989 (Tokarska-Bakir, 2022, p. 52).

Lydia Bauman works the visual as well as the poetic in her chapter. The effect on the reader is akin to encountering the work of her mother: carefully constructed prose, powerful imagery. Izabela Wagner and Griselda Pollock do a great deal to foreground and detail the work of Janina Bauman, Pollock with reference to literature and cinema. There are strong claims here for giving priority to the work of Janina Bauman, with the possible implication that it has been occluded by the celebrity of *Modernity and the Holocaust*, and that Janina's work is the more important and enduring. This may indeed be so. As to Wagner's charge that Zygmunt promised a new language, which he failed to deliver, I remain agnostic (Wagner, 2022, p. 171). (Was that the task he set himself?) Janina's book may be characterized in various different ways, as testimonial or even ethnography. There may however be less direct formal or textual relationship between *Winter in the Morning* and *Modernity and the Holocaust*, though they also suggest some textual analogues. The lives of the couple were intertwined. There was a textual or even strictly intellectual relationship between them, but also something deeper in the psyche and yet shared across the different experiences of Janina and Zygmunt Bauman, survivor and refugee/soldier joined in the realms we call love or companionship, sympathy or intuition.

Silverman suggests an additive approach, referring Bauman to what in France is called the concentrationary universe (Silverman, 2022, p. 218). A lifetime of thinking goes into these arguments, and Silverman's larger project in this field with Pollock. What *Modernity and the Holocaust* signals is the possibility, and the necessity of a sociology of violence. Reading Bauman for gain, Silverman sees Bauman aligning two discourses, one each about Modernity, and the Holocaust. As observed above, the chapter structure of the book suggests something like successive approximations. Cheyette, always incisive, here in his afterword reminds us that *Modernity and the Holocaust* is time bound. It has a modest history of its own (Cheyette, 2022, p. 237). Of course!! Texts should always be read in context. Who would have thought that Bauman's was the last word? The ghost here, or the voice of continuity, for Cheyette is Walter Benjamin rather than

Adorno (Beilharz, 1994, ch. 7). For as in the model of conversation, the last word never comes. Zygmunt's book was an argument, not data driven but rather hermeneutic, part of an ongoing conversation, written to be falsified or at the very least modified, improved upon by subsequent scholars and writers. *Gott sei dank!*

Who were the thinkers behind Bauman's book? Weber and Hilberg, maybe Arendt, were the shadow writers of *Modernity and the Holocaust*, with Adorno and Horkheimer a kind of uncanny absent presence. The tradition out of which Bauman worked was Weberian Marxism, following that clue from Merleau-Ponty, but itself also a broader trend equally apparent in the trend from Lukács to the Budapest School (Beilharz, 2020b, in press). The Frankfurt School may also be characterized in this way. Catlin here sees Adorno as the crucial shadow figure. But is this where we should be looking for the secret? Whatever conclusions we might draw, it is important not to take Bauman at this word, as when he erupts "I don't like Habermas!!" (Catlin, 2022, p. 202). He relied on Habermas in *Critical Sociology* and thereafter in his commitment to dialogue, but turned away from *Theory of Communicative Action*, redolent of Parsons, of the American sociology he later identified with solid modernity. Was this a secret? Surely the point is not that Bauman substitutes Adorno for Habermas, but that he refuses the will to system which Habermas comes to represent in *Theory of Communicative Action*. What attracted him to Adorno was his style. As I suggested to Bauman in conversation around 2000, the key thinkers for his own project seemed to include Gramsci, Simmel and Janina Bauman (Beilharz, 2000a, p. 334). The point rather was that, as he used to say, his was a house of many rooms – the sheer volume of interlocutors is exhausting, all grist to his mill. Bauman thinks only through other thinkers.

There is so much more in *Revisiting Modernity and the Holocaust*, more indeed, as we should expect, than in *Modernity and the Holocaust*. Of the *Holocaust Revisited* book, we may ask the same question as we do of the Bauman classic: does it change the status of Bauman's book? This it does, though it also clarifies its regional nature as a study of modernity, and the Holocaust. In beginning this article I restated the maxim that we need to take into consideration the task that Bauman set himself. In concluding, we could repeat another old maxim: we each write in the hope not of eternity but of revision: we hope that those who follow will do better than us. And so it is with *Modernity and the Holocaust*. It may be a classic, it may have been a catalyst; but today we should likely begin somewhere else, for example with Snyder's *Bloodlands* (Snyder, 2010), or Gross's *Neighbours* (Gross, 2000/2001), or perhaps reaching back to its prompting in *Winter in the Morning* (J. Bauman, 1985). In terms of the mainstream of historical sociology, a better place to start today might be Michael Mann's leading works, like *Fascists* (Mann, 2004) and *The Dark Side of Democracy* (Mann, 2005).

Scholarship is mobile, as well as historical. Should we still read Bauman on the Holocaust? That would likely depend on our purpose, and on our cultural and political setting. We would not now read Bauman's sources, save perhaps Arendt, Browning, and

Hilberg any more than we would read his sources in his earlier mainstream sociological writings. The maps of ideas move, the markers migrate or fall away. We do not now read Spencer. Do we still read Parsons? This may be our loss, or not. Marx, and Weber some of us likely will persist with, not least when it comes to the continuing puzzle of making sense of modernity, culture and power, capital and the state. Traditions are bound to disappoint us, but we nevertheless rely on them, even as we make them anew, or invent them.

Books become classics. We move on, but should remember that Bauman was our *Vorlauffer*. He was a pioneer when it came to confronting the Holocaust, but especially in his enthusiasm to force the question of the nature and possibilities of modernity itself. This intellectual story, viewed across these three time slices, may be as close as we get to the idea of progress. As he said to me more than once, regarding some controversy or other, the dogs bark, the carnival moves on.

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### Psy szczekają, karnawał trwa dalej... O Zygmuncie Baumanie, nowoczesności i Zagładzie po latach

**Abstrakt:** *Nowoczesność i Zagłada* (wyd. oryg. *Modernity and the Holocaust*) ma już trzydzieści lat. Jak należy podchodzić dziś do tej książki, kontrowersji wokół niej, jej historii i jej kontekstu? W niniejszym artykule proponuję trzy kroki, które przeprowadzą nas przez ten labirynt. W kroku pierwszym, przypominam główne twierdzenia, które Zygmunt Bauman stawia w swojej książce z roku 1989. W drugim odnoszę się do opublikowanego w roku 2002 czterotomowego zbioru esejów na jej temat pod moją redakcją, który przedstawia recepcję tej pracy w ciągu dziesięciu lat od jej wydania. W trzecim kroku zaś nawiązuję do nowego tomu zatytułowanego *Revisiting Modernity and the Holocaust* [*Nowoczesność i Zagłada po latach*], który ukazał się w roku 2022 i służy za trzeci pryzmat oglądu obejmujący kolejny przedział czasowy. W podsumowaniu stwierdzam, że książka Baumana stała się pozycją klasyczną, co oznacza, że nadal stanowi nieodzowną lekturę i punkt odniesienia, ale w międzyczasie debata posunęła się już dalej i zaczęła toczyć się nowymi torami. Jak mawiał Bauman: „Psy szczekają, a karnawał toczy się dalej”.

**Wyrażenia kluczowe:** Zygmunt Bauman; Zagłada; nowoczesność; Janina Bauman; tekst; kontekst

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