

FACTORS WHICH MADE HOLOCAUST POSSIBLE, ARE STILL WITH US. BECAUSE WE ARE STILL MODERN

Interview with Zygmunt BAUMAN

- **Alexander Plencner (A. P.):** Professor Bauman, you have published several books centered around specific term of yours – “liquid”: like *Liquid Modernity* (2000), *Liquid Love* (2003), *Liquid Life* (2005) and *Liquid Fear* (2006). Can you explain what you mean by this term? Why did you decide to use this metaphor?

Zygmunt Bauman: Well, by 1980s, I think, the feeling, the intuition got rose among the people trying to grasp the changing reality of that time, that the conceptual network which we use all around in social science to grasp the nature of modern life doesn't fit any longer. There are too many anomalies found empirically in the current situation to be accommodated in this old framework of concepts. And I don't know whether you remember, probably not, it wasn't a long time ago, but there was a time when people started widely describing the reality as postmodern, just to underline the old categories used to describe modern society ought to be rethought, revised, replaced by something else. Well, I have no other way of expressing what I found myself in the contemporary reality but use it, the term postmodern, postmodernity. In what I call trilogy about modernity, *Legislators and Interpreters*, the first, *Modernity and the Holocaust* and *Postmodern Ethics*, I use the term postmodernity. But from the very beginning I felt quite uneasy about it because the very prefix “post-” suggests, whether you like it or not, that modernity is over. We are already in a different era and now that was absolutely incorrect because you were more modern than ever before. The modernity started as you know, from melting all solids as Marx and Engels described already in 1848. And from this point of view you were more eagerly melting the solid than ever before. We were so quickly melting them, that they, that the new solid which you tried to construct, to put together had no time to solidify. So it was a constant change. The only certainty was uncertainty. That was the first objection towards the concept of postmodernity. We are still modern so it's not true that we are postmodern.

The other objection was that postmodern is a purely negative concept. It tells us what we are not already, but it tells us nothing about what we are really at the moment. So I was waiting for a positive concept rather than negative one which captures the features of all reality now, not simply by comparison with old ones but by their own substance, by their own nature. I used the concept of liquid modernity for the first time in the year 2000 so it took me more than ten years to actually find something to replace postmodernism. Quite a long time.

And why liquid? I think it is the best fitting metaphor to describe reality. If you look into encyclopedia under the term liquid, what do you find? Liquid is a substance which can not keep its shape. Solid bodies, as you know, you have to apply durable force in order to change their shape. We have to cut them, we have to rub them and all set of things. But liquid, well, I just move a little bit my fingers [Zygmunt Bauman tilted his glass of water] and it already changes its shape. Now, that's precisely the feature of our reality in which virtually everything lasts



Zygmunt Bauman (1925) is a Polish sociologist who left to England, where he has published his major works on modernity, Holocaust, globalization, consumerism, morality, rationality and social exclusion. In the Czech Republic and Slovakia, he has been well known since the sixties, when first translations of his books appeared. After 1989 other works were published, notably *Modernity and the Holocaust*, *Globalization: The Human Consequences* and *Liquid Modernity*. Zygmunt Bauman is one of the Europe's most influential sociologists, British Guardian has labelled him “the most influential sociologist working in Europe.” Dennis Smith described Bauman as “the Prophet of Postmodernity” in a book of the same name from the series devoted to key contemporary thinkers. University of SS. Cyril and Methodius awarded him with a Degree of Doctor Honoris Causa upon Zygmunt Bauman on 5th November 2013.

until further notice. We don't think about a thousand-years Reich, Hitler's deeds or the end of history, the final drive of communism, Stalin's fall, totalitarianism, under a short live today, they don't have long term purposes, we don't have a vision over ultimate, perfect society.

If you know, the beginning of perfectness, Leon Battista Alberti, the great architect, philosopher, artist of Renaissance, defined the state of perfection as the state in which every further change could be only a change to worse, which means, what is the underlying assumption, that is forever. Who would like to change it for worse? Once you reach it, that is the end of the story. The story of modernity was very specific, very explicit about it. They don't want change for the sake of change. They want a change to make all future change redundant and not necessary. So they wanted to melt solids not because they were solids but because they were not solid enough. That's the problem. That they wanted to replace all with... Oh, you have designed discussion here, designed by reason. Solids, solids should be resistant to all contingencies, accidents, surprises of history. We don't do it any longer, we don't have the vision of the earth point which we want to achieve. We want, we know from where we are running, what is disturbing, disaffecting, something which you dislike in the present situation. But other revisions of the terms are always short-term. We don't like this one, this thing, so we change it; that thing, so we change it. Now, that's precisely the sense of the liquid. We know how we've changed so far and if you want to change it again and know what to do. But we don't have any vision of the final, the finishing line, something like that.

Liquid modernity means that we live in the state of factual or putative, but anyway that's how we feel sense of uncertainty. We are not sure whether our steps which we're taking are right ones or incorrect ones. We are aware, painfully aware that whatever we decide is not free of risks. You know, you would be back in this Risikogesellschaft, all decisions, all undertakings are saturated with risks which we try to calculate but we can never calculate in a certain way. So ignorance is one thing, importance is another. I think that the very important feature of liquid society is liquid modernity, mutual inadequacy of means and ends. Max Weber a long time ago, more than hundred years ago, defined the rationality as selection of the right means to the ends which are given. Now, we can't select these right means because we don't have them.

The aspect of modern, of liquid modernity which I came recently to underline, emphasize, well, more than anything else, is what I call the walls between power and politics. Power being ability to have things done, and politics being ability to decide which things ought to be done. Power and politics were both for two hundred years or so in the hands of the government, of the political institutions of the nation state, of the sovereign state. Therefore, when I was young, everybody around on the left wing, on the right wing, in the centre, whatever they believed; that if we only know what we want, there is somebody who will do it in the government. All debates were addressed to the government. One would say that this national state was the joined household of the married couple, married couple of power and politics. They were altogether. The government was presumed to be able to make a policy and to put it in life, to realize it. Much of the power evaporated from the nation state level into the cyberspace of the – Manuel Castells, the great Spanish sociologist, calls it a “space of flows”. Everything is flowing there. But politics remained in what he calls the “space of places”, of places, it is fixed to the ground. The decisions taken in Bratislava are obligatory only within Slovakia, not one centimeter further. That applies not only to relatively smaller states like Slovakia, but the United States, or to China, or to Russia. They all are dependent on powers which are beyond their reach of control. So, the discrepancy between means and ends, the gravity of the tasks which are confronting, which are already global. And paucity of means which are still local. We are trying to find local solutions to globally created problems. That is very difficult and that's why we are in the state of uncertainty and, in addition, of impotence. We may know already what to do, we may have the tools what to do, we may quarrel and agree what to do. But who would like to do it? That's a big problem.

- **A. P.:** Your English publications now span forty years. That is a very long time of active publishing – not to mention your publications in Polish before 1972. Can you tell us in what areas of sociology you most notably changed your opinions over time? Did anything really surprise you?

Zygmunt Bauman: Oh! I think that if I look back on my intellectual history so to speak, I think that's a graveyard of ideas, a plantation of ideas. Certain things are persisting. My interests – it was born together with my reading of Antonio Gramsci a long long time ago which liberated me once and for all from believing in any kind of deter-

mination. Incorporating the free will, the fact that we are making decisions really. We can say “no” to anything. We have the particle “no” in our language which means we can deny the reality. And we have the future tense in our language which means that we can discuss realities which don't exist yet, which are completely imaginary. And with these two weapons, determination of human future is of course out of the question. That's why the principles which act relatively well whenever scientists are dealing with inanimate topics, inanimate objects, are not applicable to human story. Because first of all the future is unpredictable by nature. Václav Havel, the name known to you very well, when he summed up his experience of life in politics, he knew politics much better than I do because he looked at this from all sides – from the dungeons, from the presidential palace – and he knew it very well. And he said – he was a poet – in order to create future you need to know what songs they should be willing to sing. The trouble is there is no way of predicting what songs they should, would like to sing next year. And that's precisely the point.

And I've read so much from Gramsci, the intellectual soul of Gramsci, what he calls “praxis”, he calls it “the philosophy of praxis”. The first time I actually put it in writing was in Culture as Praxis – the book which I actually brought from Poland to England, but gave it final shape when already there. But it was fifty years, almost fifty years ago. That was the greatest upheaval in my thinking. But later I don't think there were very radical steps. I learned quite a lot about modernity when I worked on modernity of the holocaust. But one thing which I learned was also that this reality, these factors which made holocaust possible, and other cases of genocides, cases of going out of norm are still with us because we are still modern. But at the same time there are new factors that appeared which make repetition of this form making probable. So, our threats, which we are afraid of, are different. The threats which were afraid of our ancestors... we can say that threats which frightened them in their use, they change. You know, some artists try to condense, to express it fully, to articulate, or to speak the hidden fears of their era. Because every era has its fears, its anxieties, nightmares, something which it's afraid of, but the nature of these fears is changing with other era. The dominant nightmare when I was young was George Orwell's 1984. In brevity Orwell himself condensed the message which was there as the soldier boot trampling on human face. Everybody expected the greatest danger coming from concentrated power, from tyranny, totalitarianism and so on. Interesting point, in 1984, the year 1984, obviously all sorts of journalists decided to write about George Orwell, right, because his title was 1984. And here we are in 1984 and let's look how it works! The interest in George Orwell lasted, I don't know, like in all press sensations and press fashions, it lasted two or three days and then George Orwell again disappeared. The booksellers who collected the supplies of the book just expecting that there would be a good marketing. They were very disappointed because ... the supplies would remain unsold. And I was thinking why it is so. The answers were simple, I think. The fears which were expressed in George Orwell's book were not the fears which fought people living in 1984. They changed. They looked, they read... If they read George Orwell as a science fiction, somewhere from distance, not telling them anything about their own life, about their own problems. But it doesn't mean that we are less frightened than they were. We are as much frightened. If you at all are able to compare the density of the volume of fears between different eras.

If you want to look at contemporary dystopia which tries to capture the contemporary fears, my recommendation is Michel Houellebecq, the great French novelist who published the book Possibility of an Island. It was exactly the same intention which was visible in George Orwell. George Orwell wanted to show us, to his contemporaries, what would happen to us, how it would end, if we went on as we are going now without doing anything to stop it. But exactly the same asks Michel Foucault. If we are going on with our emancipation, unconstrained freedom, individualization, deregulation, cult of the body, cult of entertainment and so on. Here we will land. I don't want to tell you and to spoil your pleasure, you haven't read probably Houellebecq yet, so I won't tell you how it ends. But I wholeheartedly recommend it to you to read it because it shows strength, it's poetically recycled, but nevertheless the hidden fears which spoil your own joy of life, you even could articulate that concretely. What you feel is simply the fluidity of your setting, you're working for one big company which works for a bigger company who can swallow this company and then they will be cutting assets, introducing economies in order to change profits of stockholders. And the social position, social safety, social pride which you are accommodated to, which you accumulated thanks to your previous efforts, will disappear or take private relations, partnerships.

So you are surrounded by friends, OK, you have a partner whom you love, you are loved by, and so on. Well, art originals, as you know probably from my writings, role profusely about pure relationships. And they are pure because there are “no strings attached”. They are based only on expectations of gratification coming from the other person. Once you stop expecting the gratification, gratifications are hard, and rare of coming, or if you spot the opportunity for greater gratification on the other side of the fence there’s no reason why you shouldn’t remain loyal. Pure relationship is only about gratification. All right, that spells out the tremendous about the freedom which our ancestors bound by the iron cage of marriage where always the walls never were experienced. That is the game. What is the loss? What are the losses precisely? To lose our security. Because you cannot stop thinking what you have earned if your partner first assigns that gratification is not forthcoming. And enough is enough. In order to make a pure relationship, you need two persons to agree. In order to break them, one person is enough. It is a recipe for a never-ending uncertainty. Uncertainty – its impotence – you cannot stop it. And if you add uncertainty and impotence, that’s the third element and probably the most powerful of them all. That’s the element of humiliation. I’m good at dancing, I can’t, I don’t know what to do, I can’t stop things which I don’t like, I’m not, I’m not the right man for the present circumstances. These are the liquid fears and liquid damages which, because they are liquid, have the one extra feature which previous fears did not have. The abilities are uncored, they are defused, they’re floating. You feel that something is threatening but you can’t be sure what, you can’t put your finger on it, therefore you’re constantly in a state of exile.

- **Ladislav Volko (L. V.):** Is there only one Professor Bauman or are there two: Bauman before emigration and Bauman after the emigration?

Zygmunt Bauman: Jorge Luis Borges, a great Argentinean writer, has a short story. “In the Park” it is called. He sits in the park on a bench and young man sits next to him, they start conversing and slowly Jorge Luis Borges comes to conclusion that he is sitting beside Jorge Luis Borges aged twenty. He himself was of the age of sixty. Again, I won’t tell you the whole story, but the one thing I want to tell you is that in the end he comes to conclusion that they can’t really communicate properly – they are two different persons solidly. Simply because he already knows what will happen to that other one but the other one has also lots of images, fantasies, ambitions, wishes, desires and so on which do not contain this old Borges. One after the other, because the story of Borges, like all his stories, is not just written for fun. It’s some sort of philosophical treatise. He writes about impossibility of looking back and gives the proper interpretation of what’s happened. People who are looking from outside for whom twenty-year-old Borges and sixty-year-old Borges are both other persons, objects of investigation, are in much better situation, taken actually in comparison like to put one, juxtapose one with the other and so on. But Bauman who carries inside this younger Bauman cannot look at you objectively simply because it is an impossible, logically impossible situation, to be inside or outside at the same time.

I don’t believe that I’ve changed. My interest certainly didn’t change when I left Poland. Well, I do not so much left Poland, I was left, I was left Poland. I had plenty of offers to spend the second part of my life just cutting the coupons for the first part, join all sorts of... Once upon a time there was the so called science called cremlinology. Have you ever heard about it? Or sovietology – described what I remembered from the previous life. I refused that because I wanted to continue my sociological work. I took and finished work on culture in Poland. Then I finished it in England. All the rest was the continuation. I read, I wrote in Poland my habilitation work which was, as you know, perhaps you know, Class, Movement, Elite, Klasa, ruch, elita in Polish, but the first book after Culture which I wrote in England was Memories of Class which was the continuation of, no, drawing further conclusion from that first work. So there was a continuity and discontinuity. And discontinuity was not necessarily because I changed my interests, my topics but simply because the life was changing around.

But the difference between England and Poland – I don’t remember having any influence, really, I’ll express it in full in book length conversation with Keith Tester [What use is sociology? Conversations with Michael Hviid Jacobsen and Keith Tester, 2013] He asked me about these issues. I don’t know whether you are aware that Warsaw University in which I spent the first part of my sociological life was the most cosmopolitan university – department of philosophy and sociology – the most cosmopolitan of comparative departments all over the world. Both to the East from Warsaw and to the West from Warsaw. In soviet countries, as you know, bourgeois

sociology was prohibited, it didn’t exist. Not in Warsaw. The student on Warsaw University was exposed to every single theory, every single school which was ever taught in social sciences. On the other, to the West of Poland, where the whole reform is revolutionary, Marxist tradition was there yet not existing. The continental traditions of sociology were completely unknown in English sociology. I remember when I came I wrote a paper about hermeneutics, and I asked my otherwise very learned colleagues in my department in Leeds – very good teachers – their opinion. You know what they answered? “It’s so unEnglish!” [laughing] Probably they heard the word hermeneutics for the first time. It was not there. It came from the German and French roots of sociology, but not from America which was dominant in that other time. So there was no shock for me, rather if there was shock, rather disappointment because I expected more knowledge there. I didn’t feel handicapped because I was coming from behind the Iron curtain. Not at all. That’s my answer.

- **L. V.:** As human beings, we are fallible. This of course applies to scientists and scholars as well. In what areas can a sociologist go wrong?

Zygmunt Bauman: Well, in every area science could go wrong, in every area. I don’t believe that there is a single concept which I’ve ever used in my too long sociological life, and which I’m still now using, which is not open to criticism and revision and one did have to reject quite a few concepts in the history. We are trying to grasp reality as it goes, as it goes. In order to grasp it we have to simplify it. Theorizing means cutting out the unnecessary things. Michelangelo when asked how, what is his technique, how he manages to carve such beautiful sculptures, he answered: “It’s very simple. You just take a block of marble and cut out every unnecessary piece.” [laughing] All our creation, all thinking consists in your decision, my decision, his decision, about what is relevant, what is irrelevant. Leave out irrelevant and present simplified picture of a part of reality and then you are able to describe it. Otherwise you won’t be able to describe it. You just repeat, go on repeating one after one every single bit of your current experience.

By the way, Borges, whom I’ve already mentioned, has another short story which is called “Funes, the Memorious” which tells an adventure of a young man who fell from a horse and was injured in a very peculiar way – he couldn’t put to it together, he couldn’t synthesize, he was deprived of the ability to synthesize. If he saw a dog sitting and a dog running, he couldn’t understand why they both are called the same name “dog”. They are different. And he was absolutely unable to tell any story of something which happened to him because telling what happened to him required much more time than the story itself. He went in the opposite directions, tragic directions, not to simplify things and enabled you to swallow it and digest. But on the contrary to make it even more complicated that what we already see normally with our senses when we look around. So, every simplification is risky because you may leave out something which is really relevant.

Every majority started from being a minority, there is no other way of becoming majority, all need to start new. Every one-hundred-year-old oak tree started from being an acorn, this small, there is no other way of becoming one-hundred-year-old oak. And that’s the story, that the new ideas appear first as heresies, then they become orthodoxies and they end their lives as prejudices. Also that is what happens to other things. Every science has the same story. It’s not a straight line, it consists of inventing, designing new ways of classifying, organizing the vision of reality, and replacing, and substituting them for the old ones which you actually reject. And the same applies to sociology.

I myself define sociology, which I am trying to operate so to speak, as a never-ending continuous dialogue with common sense. When I was young, sociology was not like that. My very last teacher, whom I revere and I really respected, still taught me that sociology is about correcting common sense. Assumption was that the common sense is mostly incorrect. Fortunately, we are here, we have learnt sociology so we can correct it. I don’t think it’s like that. I think that we are... What we are doing is what could be called secondary hermeneutics. We are interpreting what has been already interpreted by actors of life – ordinary people who live in the society. It’s the secondary hermeneutics. We are not grasping a raw material like physicists do – who just go directly to electron or positron or whatever. We are trying, we are starting from reality which already has been interpreted. With interpretation of reality. Others engage is conversation – dialogue with its pre-interpretations. Perhaps we are right in re-interpreting it but perhaps it will come out as Havel suggested, we will find out what songs they should want to sing next year, right. And it will prove that our attempt to improve the interpretation make them more comprehensible, more adequate to reality. We are all false, misdirected or whatever.

I don't quite understand your question. All our knowledge is in the constant state of becoming. This becoming is not the straight line. The later knowledge is not necessarily built on the basis of the old knowledge. It goes all the ways. Thomas Kuhn wrote this famous book *Scientific Revolutions*. He was the first to suggest that not only social sciences, where it is more or less understandable, but also in the hard sciences – chemistry, biology, physics. It is about the same. You have one theory. It helps you to organize the empirical knowledge. To some extent, up to the certain point, and then the amount of anomalies that do not fit, it becomes so big that you just have to reject this, accept that organizing view what he would call paradigm and replacing it with another. That happens in every science.

• **A. P.:** In these days, we can observe phenomenon that is quite alarming: growing distrust of general population towards science and scientists. Why is that? What's going on in the society when people no longer trust to research, methodology, solid theories? What happened?

Zygmunt Bauman: I wonder if we don't exaggerate here. I don't know if there's growing of distrust of science. Distrust was a favorite companion of science from the very beginning really. Scientists were always imagined in popular views as some sort of magicians. You don't know what to expect from them, from their awful stories in medieval times when modern science was already beginning, expecting also the disaster things coming from learned people. Do you remember the famous story Sorcerer's apprentice? It is about what disasters you can fall in, when you apply, the advisors, their formulas, when you are not following them obediently and so on. Distrust of science, well, there were very many science fiction books which described the terrible world which is created by science.

What you mean actually is the power of technology which is creative with science. The contemporary distrust is that it will get out of the control. What about genetic engineering – you don't know what to come out of it, there are so many possibilities which are opened here – like the two genetically engineered species, criss-crossing, creating monsters,... They don't happen. But one never knows. Atomic energy, great advance, really, splitting of atom, infinite source of energy. But you have this Fukushima and you have Chernobyl so you don't know what to expect. There might be another explosion and so on. Science needs taking risk. The practical art of science is technology – what scientists thought about, wrote in mathematical formulas, then technologies transform into very powerful machines which can act on great distance but in which way they will be acting you can be quite sure.

Gunter Anders created a concept of Prometheus complex which has several different aspects [The Obsolescence of Humankind]. One aspect is Prometheus' pride, of course. We are very pleased with ourselves that we have changing reality almost as easily as God who created it. Then there is a Prometheus of admiration so to speak. Prometheus becomes the model for our behaviour. We want to be like him. Then Prometheus envy, that was a disaster according to Gunter Anders. Because we dream about doing without our hands what Prometheus's technology has done with very complicated machines. For example, the author describes this awful event of My Lai village in Vietnam, as you know, what American soldiers did. They sit in the helicopters and with their own hands they cut throats of the whole population – women, children, all the men. They were constantly sitting in helicopters and throwing in apart. And they solved from height these tremendous and outraged results of technology of death. And desire developed into just to be up to the standard of napalm. Do with their all bare hands what the napalm has done and what they were capable of doing. That's one of the ways of being distrustful. It sets, it transgresses the limits of the possible trust. It transgresses the limits of our ambitions, our wishes and they lead to awful consequences.

Together with David Lyon I recently published the book of conversations about liquid surveillance. It was returned published still before Snowden. We are all under surveillances today. Whatever you do, whenever you push buttons on your laptop or your mobile and iPhone, it is a convert. You are constantly surveilled by Big Brother. Right. We are submitting ourselves placidly without resistance to constant observation, surveillance. But also the question and technology consists today in releasing the operators of technology from their feeling of moral responsibility. This responsibility is transferred on machines. Drones for example. We don't kill those people, drones kill those people. Drones are not exactly directed from a far, they are smart missiles. They look themselves for the target. They find them. Well, they found the targets and they hit them. I wasn't responsible,

I am terribly sorry. I just sent it. But what would happen? I can't really fully explain and take upon myself responsibility. In one of the drone undertakings, drone took a wedding procession for the march of terrorists and destroyed the whole village celebrating the marriage. That was explained as technological error. That's also a risk to be afraid of the development of science. Because it not only makes us more important, but it also takes off responsibility from us, from our shoulders. Responsibility for the consequences of our own importance.

• **A. P. & L. V.:** Do you hold any vision for contemporary media? What should they do? How should they operate? On what kind of information or even agenda should they focus on? And how do you imagine the future of our society?

Zygmunt Bauman: Well, I still believe here that Marshal McLuhan and his statement that media is the message which means simply that media has the qualities, certain qualities which they can't get rid of, they devolve and they stop being the media as they are. I don't know which media you have in mind. Corporations which are engaged in selling entertainment or whether you have the self operated technologies?

• **A. P.:** No, traditional media, news media and mass media.

Zygmunt Bauman: Mass media. Well, I don't think that you can actually change a thing there because they are guided, they must be guided under conditions in which we live, we are living in a society of consumers, we live in a market applied society, they are guided by ratings. If you have high ratings, you attract advertisements, you attract commercials. The commercial company offers the TV company success, to get a lot of profit. If you don't satisfy expectation of your viewers and they switch you off and go to another channel. Then, of course, ratings are falling and so are falling the profits from commercials. That's how it works. Take it out from this context of market competition, would they change? That's a big problem. You make, or you decide to make state television instead of market subject television. So their income won't be dependent on the ratings – on how many people look for fun or how many people are satisfied by their broadcast. Yes, but the problem is they think the viewers who are trained in entertaining television would hardly switch to the boring television. You know, enlightening perhaps, but it is less by their standards – not funny broadcast, that's it. Let's say we are too advanced already. We have dozens of years of training, training conducted by existing television as it is. And people are trained, they are drilled from the very start, from very early childhood, from the moment they are able to visualize reality around and training in expectation and entertainment. We need it. Not by accident, the kind of information which is transferred and transmitted by television news is called infotainment, the combination of information and entertainment. If it is not entertaining, look what's happening. The most of the television broadcasters, when they convey news, they are not any longer sitting at the table, they are walking. Everything is fluid, the latest news, you know, I'll tell you a funny story, this sort of things. Weather forecasts are normally conveyed these jokes so people laugh, even if they predict storms and hurricanes. We are trained to expect them. Most of the people are switching on television if they are seeking funny things to be told, something you say – we don't have an emotional pleasure about. So, it will take a minor culture revolution to make us willing to listen to this, let's say long debate between sages. Who is going to do it?

Remember that our stretch of patience is shortening thanks to Internet which happens in real time very quickly, you don't have to wait very long for the results of pushing your finger or pushing one key. All the research shows that young people who are brought up already on using Internet who can't imagine world without Internet they are not able any longer to read an article on the screen till the end. It is much about they can't keep attention that long. In the middle of somewhere they would switch to another website because another website may have something interesting they might get and that they would miss.

Something already happened. We have a different cult of the culture which is navigated by digital communication. We are living in two worlds. One world is the online world, another is the offline world. We have to combine them both. The result of these things is unpredictable. I can't tell you what you come out of it. For the time being, there is a clear tendency because life in online is much more comfortable, easy, quick in implementation. It works like Nescafé. A sort of brewing coffee which was done long and responsible work when I was young.

Now you just pour a little bit of hot water into your glass and coffee is ready for using. The same applies to Internet. You just ask Google a question and immediately find an answer to your problem: you want a date, you just connect to the date agency, they give you the menu, colour of hair, weight, interests. You select, you compose the right date from all these elements and it is done. You don't like it and I think it is more easier, you just stop sending messages and receiving messages. An inconvenient relationship is broken. So online life is much easier. Tempting, very attractive. Comfortable by comparison with offline life. In offline life you have to negotiate everything, you have to present yourself fully – it is a very difficult issue really. But when it comes to breaking your relationship it is awfully difficult. Because you have to apologize, you have to invent causes why you don't want to share life with the partner any longer. You have to lie. Lying is a very unpleasant activity. If you lie online at least you could be pretty sure that you can never be spotted. Because you have presented yourself in several different identities. Depending on with whom you are talking.

So, it is a period, a process, far from being finished. There is an interaction of online experience and offline experience. The present tendency is that the people who are trained, who taste the facility of the online life begin to start questions: Why offline cannot be made more like online, as easy, as comfortable as the other one is? B – question: What the other will be you will know? I want because as I have said it is the process in the beginning and it would take some time to see it's true.

*Interview took place at International Conference Marketing Identity 2013 in Smolenice
5th November 2013.
Prepared by Alexander Plencner and Ladislav Volko.*

