

REVIEWS

Socio-Cultural Management Journal

Volume 6 (2023), Number 1, pp. 187-189

doi: <https://doi.org/10.31866/2709-846X.1.2023.278673>

p-ISSN 2709-846X, e-ISSN 2709-9571

**Review of Significant
Monographic Material**

© E. Salvadori, 2023

UDC: 37+316.7]:303.446.2

JEL Classification: I29, Z19

Received: 12/04/2023

Elisa Salvadori*

University of Verona, Verona, Italy

Education and Intercultural Identity: Review of Significant Monograph¹

“Education and Intercultural Identity”, a dialogue between Zygmunt Bauman and Agostino Portera, published by Routledge in 2021, is an essay written by two hands in which the authors dialogue on issues related to the challenges of the globalised world, starting with a shared understanding of the importance of education as a possible answer to deal with the complexity of modernity.

The work follows a question-and-answer scheme in which the two author visions and reflections on the main themes emerge. The dialogue unwinds between risks and opportunities in a globalised world, religious pluralism, pollution and loss of biodiversity, and cultural identity, in a continuous exchange of opinions in which, as Mazzeo proposes in the introduction, two complementary positions intertwine. In dealing with these issues, Portera represents the optimistic view centred on opportunities and positive aspects, while Bauman emphasises the need to focus on critical and sombre aspects. The two authors' approaches can also be considered complementary from the point of view of the disciplines they pertain: sociological and analytical perspective of Bauman is combined with the educational and pedagogical perspective of Portera.

* Research Supervisor – Professor Agostino Portera

¹ Bauman, Z., & Portera, A. (2021). *Education and Intercultural Identity: A Dialogue between Zygmunt Bauman and Agostino Portera*. London: Routledge.
Doi: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003123705>

In the first chapter, the dialogue unfolds on the risks and challenges of globalisation but also on possible responses. Starting with the opportunities related to pluralism in politics, health, economics, and culture, Portera notes, as a vital difficulty, the need to face cultural diversity. The author retraces some of Bauman's best-known texts to bring reflection to two main aspects: the first, is the need to consider the positive aspects, great opportunities, and the beauty of living in a country at peace, democratic and pluralist. The second is about understanding how to act to ensure that these possibilities are not just for some countries but increasingly shared by all the world citizens. Bauman's answers, starting from the inseparable connection between risks and opportunities, bring a reflection on the justice-injustice relationship and the difference between multiculturalism and multiculturalism. The author concludes the chapter by borrowing Jorge Luis Borges' metaphor of the Babylonian lottery, reminding us that “we are gamblers” by decree of fate (or, more correctly, by our – and our modern ancestors – past choices ossified into the human condition. [...] And lottery, as I guess and hope you'd agree, is the epitome of mixing risks with opportunities and making them fully and truly inseparable” (p. 28).

The second chapter is devoted to the topic of religious pluralism. The dialogue between the authors focuses on the relations between different religions and the risks, challenges, and conflicts associated with religious pluralism in our time. The initial reflections are based on several texts, including *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of world order*, by S.P. Huntington. Questions and answers relate to the development of authoritarian and violent impulses: “Are there religious differences, or perhaps, are we facing power struggles and violent attempts to manipulate and oppress other human beings? Apart from this, could you please clarify your position regarding religious pluralism and the chance for peaceful coexistence?” (p. 36).

In the third chapter, the authors take a stand on the ecological hazards related to globalization, particularly pollution and biodiversity loss. They then begin a reflection on the seriousness of the current dangers linked to human action, as “due to their intelligence, women and men have turned into “predators without predators” and have established absolute dominion over the whole planet and all living species” (p. 46). Regarding this issue, Bauman emphasises the ambiguous nature of progress that simultaneously undermines the survival conditions of humankind and the importance of creating a collective consciousness capable of “begetting an adequate collective action” (p. 49).

The last part is dedicated to identity, a theme dear to both authors. Starting from the inevitable consequences of globalisation on the process of constructing personal and social identity which today is continuously redefined by perso-

nal choices, Portera proposes a concept of identity that is no longer mono-cultural but intercultural. An open identity is “capable and willing to adapt to constant change, a strong and stable identity that displays “humility” when confronted with diversity and otherness” (p. 57) to which Bauman adds some reflections on social interactions in the neighbourhood and the network, because “Whether we like it or not, our identities are not given: they are tasks and tasks that can hardly ever be ultimately completed and wound up” (p. 58).

Information about the Author:

Elisa Maria Francesca Salvadori, PhD Student, University of Verona, Via dell'Artigliere, 8, 37129, Verona, Italy; e-mail: elisamariafrancesca.salvadori@univr.it; orcid id: <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-2252-0350>