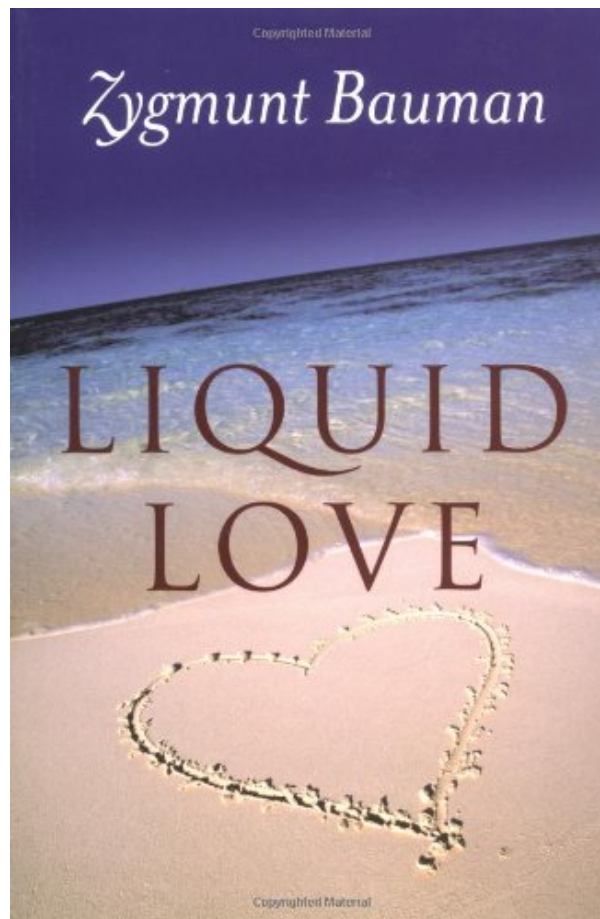
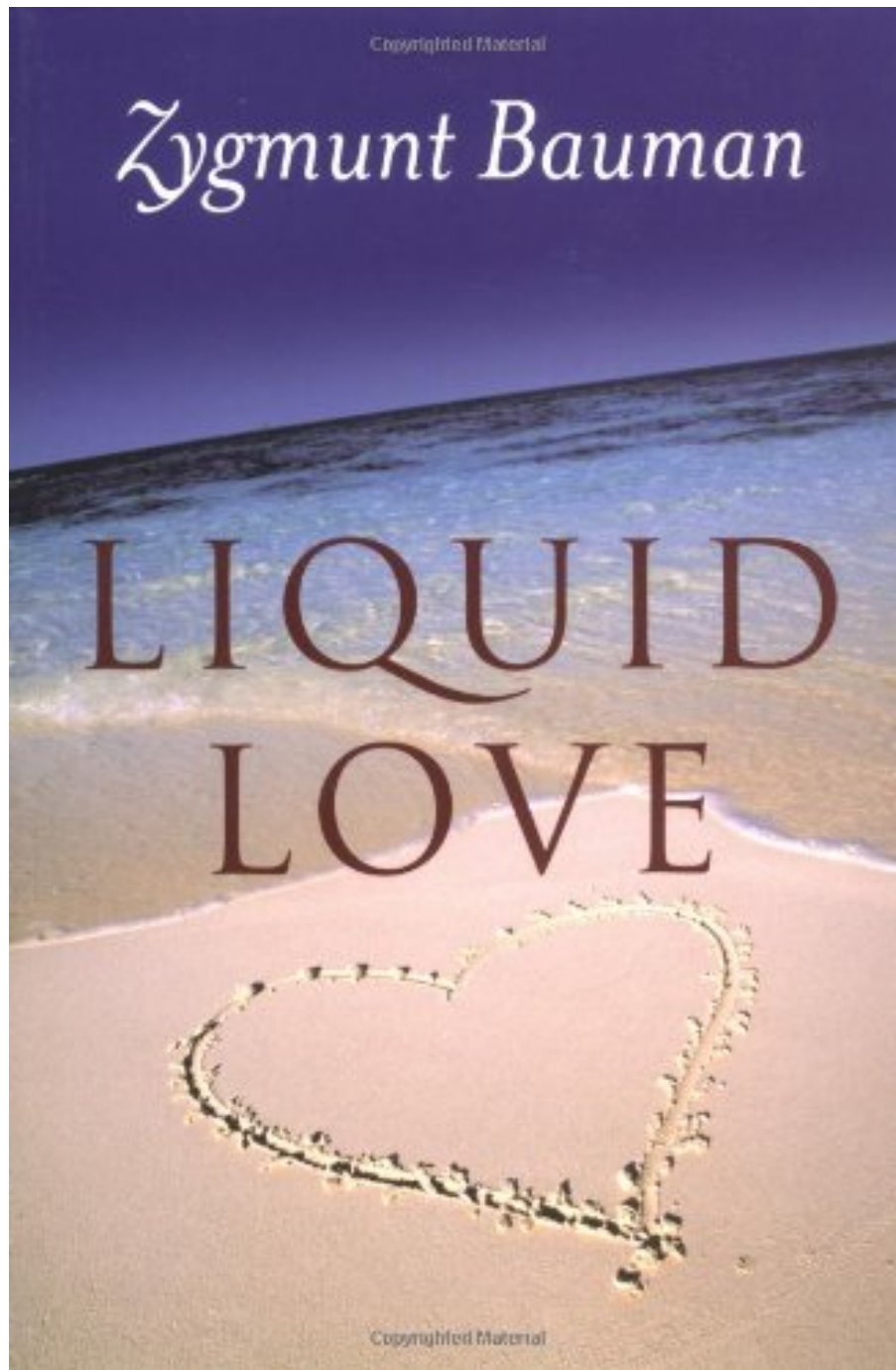


# LIQUID LOVE: ON THE FRAILTY OF HUMAN BONDS BY ZYGMUNT BAUMAN



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## Review

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"This book is timely and shows accurate observation, lucid thinking and much background knowledge and wisdom"

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Contemporary Sociology

## From the Back Cover

This book is about the central figure of our contemporary, 'liquid modern' times – the man or woman with no bonds, and particularly with none of the fixed or durable bonds that would allow the effort of self-definition and self-assertion to come to a rest. Having no permanent bonds, the denizen of our liquid modern society must tie whatever bonds they can to engage with others, using their own wits, skill and dedication. But none of these bonds are guaranteed to last. Moreover, they must be tied loosely so that they can be untied again, quickly and as effortlessly as possible, when circumstances change – as they surely will in our liquid modern society, over and over again.

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#### About the Author

Emeritus Professor of Sociology at the University of Leeds and the University of Warsaw

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Provides unintended incentive

By Dr. Lee D. Carlson

Written in the same spirit of his other works, with material that also overlaps these, the author of this book endeavors to paint a picture of what human relationships are like in modern "liquid" society. One could summarize the author's characterization as saying that life today is "liquid" because social hierarchies do not have enough time to form or dissolve immediately when they do, because ideology or ideas have only a transient impact, and because marketing strategies targeting consumers are only effective for moments, never long term. Life today is liquid because its elements, i.e. the things it depends on, are always being jostled around, like the molecules in a liquid, and finding stability or solidity is as elusive as ever.

One cannot therefore acquire a "meaningful" relationship when confronted with such volatility, and even the desire for this has either vanished or suffered considerable diminution. The author writes that the goal of forming relationships in modern life is one where the delights of such are not to be intermixed with the downside, and finding fulfillment must be accomplished without bearing any burdens. This attempt at "squaring of the circle" he states has resulted in a burgeoning "counseling" industry, the members of which are all too eager to perpetuate the creation of such. This cynical commentary is not established scientifically, and no examples are given, but in this work, as in his others, statistical or scientific justification is absent, only opinions proliferate. But these opinions are interesting, even titillating, and could perhaps motivate some readers to consider to what degree the author is being accurate in his characterizations of modern life.

Relationships that are configured to "terminate on demand" are perhaps abundant, and finding agreement with the author is straightforward, as there are many anecdotal examples of his assertions. Sexual adventures, both "inside" and "outside" of marriage are frequent, and the flow of semen remains unabated in the modern world, if not increasing in rate. Swinging lifestyles, pornographic films and literature, and adulterous relationships are greatly assisted by technology and it seems there is a drive more for sexual creativity rather

than procreation or self-indulgent pleasure. "Life is short" proclaims one website, so therefore "have an affair." Religion used to dissuade such adventures, and still does to some degree, but its hold, like other ideologies, even those of a scientific bent, is proving tenuous in the twenty-first century.

If the author commits any sin in this book it is because he seems to claim to speak for all, and forgets there are some who do not find the liquidity of modern life in any way burdensome. Far from considering living in this century an "exhausting chore" these individuals embrace uncertainty and find it immensely exhilarating. We find relationships, and sex, their immediate corollary, proving to be better, not worse for exactly the reason the author finds them troublesome or contradictory. Thankfully the traditions of the past have been supplanted by the uncertainty of the present, making life both more interesting and requiring more conceptual and physical alertness. We take nothing for granted in our relationships and we work diligently to both maintain and end them if necessary. The volatility of romance and sex are not a source of anxiety but instead a fascinating scenario that models the roller coaster ride of contemporary human relationships. To paraphrase Boris Pasternak, we are certainly all pygmies before the monstrous machine of change in the twenty-first century, but its ambiguities, along with its terrors, creates ample opportunities and awesome incentives.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Four Stars

By Mayra Echevarria

Good

0 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

... way to a paranoia on what he views as love.

By Frank

I think his life and background give way to a paranoia on what he views as love.

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