

ROLE AND PLACE OF THE HOLIDAY IN PERSON AND SOCIETY'S BEING – ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPTIONS

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ABSTRACT: AS A CULTURAL PHENOMENON THE HOLIDAY HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN OBJECT OF THE RESEARCHES OF CULTUROLOGISTS, ETHNOGRAPHERS, ANTHROPOLOGISTS, PHILOSOPHERS, SOCIOLOGISTS, ETC. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE TOPIC, THE ESSENCE CHARACTERISTICS, CLASSIFICATIONS AND DEFINITIONS OFTEN SEEM TO BE ABSOLUTELY DIFFERENT WHICH SIGNALIZE FOR NECESSITY OF MORE EXTENDED AND THOROUGH STUDY OF THAT PHENOMENON – THE HOLIDAY.

THE PRESENT PAPER ANALYZES SOME OF THE MOST CONSIDERABLE CONCEPTIONS WHICH SHOW THE MAJOR THEORETICAL PARADIGMS TAKING OUT THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF THE HOLIDAY AND STUDYING ITS EVOLUTION AND DEVELOPMENT.

KEY WORDS: HOLIDAY, MASS HOLIDAY/FEAST, CULTURE, SOCIO-CULTURE, SOCIAL COMMUNICATION.

HISTORICALLY viewed, the first artifacts of the holiday were found out in ancient written form and sources – Egyptian and Sumerian scripts. Undoubtedly, holidays have always existed – proofs can be found in myths, data collected by archeologists for carrying out of ceremonies, rituals, celebrities accompanied the holiday. The ancient times are a thing of the past holidays connected with cult of animal, totem symbols and rituals. The tribe identification with a particular totem “the same” as a representative of the tribe is on the first place. “The same” realizes a sacral connection with the ancestors among them a forefather is the totem animal. The analyzes on ethnographic point of view shows that these holidays are connected with the primitive tribe society and type of organization with the hunters fighting with wild beasts. The hunting determines the existence of the tribe. It is risky job where success has never been guaranteed. Therefore, the successful ending needs to be marked and celebrated as a victory with a special ceremony (the happy moment), i.e. it is followed by a holiday. That gives cause to feast, to enjoy combined with a complex ritual demonstrating not only the whole satisfaction but also union and unanimity, integration and entirety which features construct the group identity.

THE holiday in the past corresponds with certain sacral cosmic events with mythological character – the fight between the forces of creation against the forces of destruction (good and bad), between light and dark, life – and – death, cosmos (order) and chaos (disorder). The members of the ancient societies had had the demand to cooperate in such events, to help and support philanthropic mysterious majesty. For that reason they carry out magic actions and sacrifices to “rescue” the world, gain the bless of the duties and

guarantee order, prosperity and stability of the socium until the next holiday. The sacred imposes clear rhythm between the ordinary day and holiday, which is well known in the early Greek culture. The components of the holiday are clearly defined in it. They are precisely ordered in their realization. They are arranged in system of cult activities, competitions and feasts. The celebrating community devote entirely to this holiday which is interpreted as a holy communication with the nature and deities. In response people expect fertility, wealth, well-being and off-spring. Communicating with the beyond world by speech, dance, mimics, gesture, music, masks and etc. the celebrating group regenerates social union and entirety.

THE holiday calendar of each country strengthens its ideology, history, culture and identity. The calendar reveals the tradition and what society knows about life, time and eternity. It is a manifestation of the society which marks their whole life. The harder and more authoritative is the form of government in a country, the more regulated compulsory and mass are the holidays without any room for improvisation.

"HOLIDAYS must be as many as possible, not less than 365 days of a year that may there will not exist destructive for the state space" – teaches Plato revealing the important role of the holiday as a way of behavior of the nation in desired direction. (Plato 1981). Such standpoint might sound theoretically irrelevant the logics searches the confirmation into fact that if a cause for celebrity exists everyday a person will never leave the holiday calendar and will never be part of the community. The ancient Greek philosopher describes the holiday as a means of stabilization of the country. The country is called "to give to everyone of the people such kind of happiness which is due by nature". He puts Greece aside from the ideal because the holidays have unstable character. It makes the process of reaching the desired education very difficult, it is for the sake of the country's well-being itself. According to Plato the ideal country regarding the holidays is Egypt where the holidays are unchangeable and constant from the moment of their establishment. They bring rhythm and harmony in life (ultimative requirement of the person and attitude to the world of the ancient people). The philosopher's idea about the holiday is not only for recovering of the physical and mental energy into forms worthy for the citizen but also responds to his high purpose. Comparing this belief with the contemporary ideas, two contrary positions in interpretation of the meaning of the above-mentioned phenomenon are outlined. On the modern person's view point the holiday is deserved compensation and fun where he obtains strength, power and experience to meet the boring and dull everyday business.

THE holidays in ancient Rome occupied an important place. They were so many: two holidays per every single working day. They gave the chance for big games and competitions. All kinds of Gods and semi-Gods existed a lot of religious celebrations regarding the natural yearly cycles, important dates of Emperor and his predecessors, historical occasions and persons were celebrated as well as the holidays of the submissive nation. Luxurious, expensive and highly cost feasts were organized then. It was obvious that that way of life supported the patriotism and unity of the Empire.

RELIGIOUS and secular authorities all the ancient societies looked upon holiday very seriously, much more seriously that the productivity forces because they had the understanding that holidays confirm the statesman like model as well as the human in infinite Cosmos. Hardly in the end of the 19th century materialistic Europe and America started to look upon the holiday as a day-off and the country shortened the holidays in order to increase the productivity.

EACH holiday is a subject of scientific interest and as a result of that a lot of theoretical bases fixing it exists. Polysemantic meaning of the analyzed phenomenon itself allows such variable treatment. Exploring the variety of approaches towards its study allows its worth from all view points, following evolution and development without missing its present role and brings out the major concepts.

THE understanding of the idea of the free time as a blessing and wealth which everyday person has raises the idea of the holiday and holiday atmosphere. The ancient people refer the holiday to the behavior because the human's nature demands skills and talent not only in labor but also at rest. Idleness in freedom lays in the beginning of all beginnings when it concerns to the person and existence. The holiday is a natural element of life and his last but not least a result of working activity of the people. It is a gift symbolizing a certain action – high enjoyment showing completion of a particular cycle.

A key moment in searching of the sense of the phenomenon is that understanding namely, as a natural consequence and result of prolonged work. Aiming to the ideal and harmony the holiday together with all its elements and details help in reaching that ideal. For that reason the celebration of holiday is assessed as an educational and enlightenment factor, shaping the harmonious development of people.

PLATO enunciates the social- educational concept about the holiday. He examines the educational process itself as a polar one, combining rightly directed sufferings and pleasures. The philosopher points out the pleasure as a basic criterion of the holiday that exists, according to his interpretation, because of the physical and moral elaboration. By pointing out the importance of the holiday feasts that delight people, the author emphasizes on their educational nature (the fact that the words for "game" and "education" in Greek sound almost identically is quite interesting).

ARISTOTLE also interprets the factor pleasure of the holiday. He takes the holiday activity as called upon to serve to spiritual relaxation, "high freedom" and cognition of true happiness. This peculiar human activity, no matter what the exterior reasons are, comprises the happiness of life, pleasure and blissfulness. Interpreted from this point of view, the holiday is perceived as self-value that equals the ancient man's image of spare time as a significant property of the free citizen. This attitude brings the pleasure of the holiday close to the end means of the human activity and marks Aristotle's interpretation as a hedonistic concept of the holiday.

ONE of the most authoritative personality of the Chinese and the world history and religion – Confucius – also points out the positive significance of the holidays (unlike the majority of his contemporaries who speak in reproof of the holidays of the highest class strata as primitive and wild ones). He emphasizes the danger for the country of the arduous, restless work of the Chinese peasants and approves the "days for happiness" as an evidence for political wisdom of the governors: "The bow must not be kept stretched tight without never letting the bow strings" (Zygulski 1978: 27) This infers the essence of the so-called recreation (recreative) concept connected with regaining humans' strength, used up in the work process. According to this concept the holiday cultivates the idea of life bringing happiness to people who, in the conditions of the traditional societies and traditional economic relations, spend considerable part of their time in fatiguing manual labor. The formation, the calendar and the matter of the phenomenon are put depending on the rhythmical alternation of labor and relaxation, depending on the needs for rest.

CLOSE to the recreation concept is the labor concept of the holiday. It has a vast contribution to the theoretical fields. It is the most wide-spread and widely studied amongst the anthropologists. The social labor activity of humans lies at its basis and it is examined as exceptional and first-rate source for a holiday. It dictates the national calendar and its ritual forms. This view interprets the phenomenon as a spiritual and moral preparation for the labor obligations of people, obtained through magical deeds and cult rituals, followed by thankfulness to the high powers. The justice of the above mentioned thesis can easily be supported by the rich empirical material collected by the researchers throughout the years. However, the limitation of the frames and neglecting all other kinds of holidays that are typical for the spare time are essential shortcoming of this interpretation. Besides, the labor theory is based upon the widespread notion of absolute subordination of the rest realm to the labor realm, to the zone of the unproductive life activity of the production zone. Such an idea values the man only as a production power of society, not as a self-value.

AMONG the concepts, marking the origin of the holiday, the multi aspect mythological doctrine takes a special place. It has been formed in controversy with the theories based on the argument of the materialistic spirit of the phenomenon. Having a complicated structure, it seeks sources of the whole holiday culture in myths, legends and beliefs. In order to satisfy his needs for health and prosperity, rich harvest, peace and happiness, man influences nature. The specific way for influence depends on the knowledge and notions of its essence and the interrelations in it. People concoct mythology in order to explain their own genesis and the sense of the natural phenomena. The myth and the holiday are inseparable in the archaic society. They recreate events revealing the genesis and the history of everything surrounding people – the initial chaos; the division of the earth and water; the appearance of people, plants and animals; and later on – the social hierarchy, cultural activities, etc. The necessity for constant and very strict symbolical recreation of the “initial” events is based upon two fundamental notions. The first one is the idea of the cyclic occurrence of time, which is in constant circumrotation, in which one and the same events alternate: birth, maturity and death; poverty and lavishness; happiness and sufferings. The second one is the belief that at the end of every cycle the power of good decreases and needs support, insured by certain ritual activities. Holiday ritual activities are considered sacred, having magical power, able to influence the surrounding world of people. They restore the balance between good and bad, order and chaos, cultural and wild, and solve the contradictions at every level – natural, social, cultural. This is how the significance of genesis and the holiday is interpreted within the boundaries of this notion.

ONE of the major fields of the mythology concept is the so-called solar theory. Its goal is to determine the dependence between the holiday of everyday life and the life of people as well as to outline the pagan rituals and feasts, established in the calendar. It directly relates the origin of the holidays to the sun and divides the holiday cycle into two parts (summer and winter solstice). The significance of the holiday is interpreted through the absolute dependence of man and his activities of the natural powers and his worship to the sun. The adherents to this notion try to make a typical division of the holidays in their own way and in accordance with the theoretical assumptions for perceiving nature as a struggle between summer and winter by people.

DESPITE the vast contributions of the mythological concept and its different fields to the general theory of holiday, the fact that this concept is based upon the theoretically wrong assumption for the myth as an immediate and firsthand source of human activity cannot be

neglected. Acknowledging the majority of the ritual and spectacle forms only as a reflection of the realization of the solar phenomena (and the corresponding activities of social life), this concepts seeks the sources of the holiday culture in myths and beliefs, which turns the consequence into a reason. Myths play a huge role in the history of religion and culture, as well as in the origin of the holiday, but the myths themselves had appeared as a result of the transformation of man into a social creature and are a consequence of the development of the social history.

WHEN K. Zygluski discusses the matter about the origin of holidays, he adds his own aspect at their semantic analysis. According to the Polish researcher, each holiday is a demonstration of a value that is often high, sacred, and holy for the celebrating group. He signifies it with the term *sacrum*, which he uses with its broad meaning – covering not only the religious connotation, but the cultural welfare, too, the object of non- religious, secular cult. “The efforts to separate the *sacrum* namely from the holiday as something obstinate and juxtaposed to other cultural phenomena fail.” (Zygluski 1989 : 44) Similar points of view and ratiocinations find their own serious grounds in the religious and ritual concept, according to which the calendar, the essence and the forms of the holidays originate from the religious life of people and their ritual form.

D. FRASER also interprets the holiday activities through their relation with the religious and mythological notions, but develops the so-called anthropological concept, according to which holiday recreate the constant change between life and death, reflected in mythology. I.e. his theory reproduces the initial and common significance of the holiday, associating it with the rebirth of new commencements. The researcher discusses his beliefs in the book “The Gold Twig” (1890) – an encyclopedic research of humankind’s beliefs. He is the first to suppose there is a connection between myth and ritual. By applying the theory of evolution to anthropology, the author deduces three stages in the humankind development – magic, religion, scientific knowledge, through which man marks with holiday acts (inherited and newly-formed) his own fears and happiness, victories and expectations.

M. BAHTIN'S theory is much more universal. It doesn't deny the relation of the holiday to the labor activity of people and their necessity for rest, and accentuates upon the special social specifics of this many-sides phenomenon and he places it on the border between (art) fiction and true reality. In his book “The Works of Francois Rable and the national culture of the Middle ages and the Renaissance” (1965) M. Bahtin lays the fundamentals of examining the holidays as a cultural phenomenon , pointing its most stable and signs and categories out: “holiday time”, “holiday space”, “holyday world view”, “holiday freedom”, “holiday laughter”. The holiday in the concept of Bahtin isn't just a fictional recreation or reflection of life (or the ideal of it), but the life itself, shaped by game methods and thus inseparable from human culture. The author substantiates his theses in this so-called philosophic and cultural (world contemplative) concept with historical analysis of the carnival as a reflection of the present. The notions of the author are an object of research for many scientists and researchers of the phenomenon and practically hardly are there any elaborations or encyclopedic articles on the matter they are not mentioned in, but together with this the problematic broadens and enriches.

B. BOGDANOV comments on the sacred time and space of the holiday in his research of Old Greek Literature, culture, philosophy and human interactions, basing his arguments on the theoretical formulation of Bahtin. The reality in the Bulgarian scientist's research is built upon the duality of the workday (with quality predominating chaotic part) in which the goals

defining the behavior are small and close, and of the holiday (the part that puts in order the vital chaos) in which the goals are big and distant, which is “submerged in the existence and must solve the crucial problems of the collective body, to unite the participants via the obligatory, normative, exemplary and consequently the less individual”. (Bogdanov 2006: 196) The solemnity, the gaiety, revelry are a manifestation of the common life- asserting happiness of the achieved significance and human integrity, of the arrangement in the community and in the individual. Each holiday, according to the author, is a restorative recognition of the socium’s and the world’s ideal structure (which falls apart on a daily basis).

THE juxtaposition of the holiday to the reality is one of its defining characteristics that relate it to the myth. Holiday rituals do not recreate everyday temporality, but a mythical one. They break the pace of the historic time and events and impose mythological time and events. The contrastive principle between everyday life and holiday life is universal for all traditional cultures. Moreover, this contrast remains up to now when the holidays had acquired other scales and have chiefly corporative and home close-up. Despite that their myth is an irrevocable attribute, sustained by the participants and quite often applied by modern professionals into event management , with which they consciously (and on the grounds of pre-planned scenario) absorb the auditorium in the mythological world. The holiday doesn’t extend established social relation; it defies them, denies them, neglects ongoing decrees and norms, social hierarchy and social statuses. Man creates a new world by giving up from the existing reality and the established relationships. In such cases mythologization may be recognized by the repetition of the initial act of genesis – the celebrating people go back to the condition of chaos, because a new cosmos may be built only out of chaos. It is not a coincidence that the participants in the event have a cheerful mood, their emotions, and hopes long after the event and they go back to the rumination, perceiving it as a reality, and they consider jokes as an obligation. The rehabilitation of the power of chaos in the ritual forms manifests in the removal of different prohibitions, in transforming the world and his laws, in switching places of the object and the subject, of the low and high, of the slave and master, of death and life and so on and so forth.

ACCORDING to one of the most popular concepts of the holiday – the game concept – all in this world is based upon the game and it has penetrated in everything. It connotes a deep sacred sense and is an initial impulse in the human history. In spite of the vast theoretical assumptions on the occasion of the game as an inseparable part of the holiday J. Huizinga creates his own theory, in which the game is an epicenter of the human culture, while the holiday is interpreted as its brightest and complete manifestation. The separation from everyday life, the characteristic to the both forms vitality and happiness, tied to time and space, the combination of strictly defined order and true freedom – all these refer to the basic common features of the both cultural forms. It would be just to mention that the game, unlike the other ritual holiday, is an absolute activity and does not refer to other notional realms out of it. In this way it stays closer to those holidays that do not spring up ritualistically, but spontaneously and enthusiastically, where the free vital and natural communication is the center. Thus the holiday atmosphere is at hand in every game, but not every holiday is a game. The relation between those two is a lot more complicated than the aforementioned conclusions in the researchers’ texts. The most significant difference between the phenomena lies in their aims. The game, according to the author of “Homo Ludens”, is a goal taken alone. The holiday is always on the basis of something out of it (it is always holiday of something), it is a social institution, it is charged with functions exceeding the borders of the celebration itself.

AS far as the holiday had always been accompanied by the game, then the loss of the game element (or its transformation into “false game”) is to the detriment of its content and this leads to a crisis in the holiday culture. The book “Homo Ludens” is printed for the first time in 1938, but one can hardly say it has led to global positive changes in the sphere of spirituality up to now. Moreover – the crisis of the holiday and the festivity, which appeared in Europe during the 19th century, continues even now. That is the reason J. Huizinga is considered to be the creator of the pessimistic concept of the holiday and in the festivity in modern societies.

IN his essay “The Holiday of Fools” the American professor in theology at the Harvard University H. Cocks, also acknowledges the deepening crisis in holiday and festivity, as a result of which modern celebrations unite people less and less (in contrast to the past) and do not bind the either with nature, either with evolution of spiritual quests of humankind, or with social history. Nevertheless, the scientist postulates the so-called optimistic version of holiday theory. In his point of view, with the help of nature’s exuberance, the crises of the modern society that experiencing spiritual decline, may be overcome: “By demolishing the routine and rediscovering the past of man, the holiday enriches his experience and makes up for his narrow-mindedness... Repressing the spirit of the holiday and the imagination puts under a threat the social and historical existence of mankind, for the holiday and the imagination are irreplaceable means for adaptation and renewal in the constantly changing world.” (Rodnyanski 1976: 115) As a resolute opponent to the revolutionary transformation of society, Cocks discusses this cultural phenomenon as an effective means for channeling the dangerous violence and radical dispositions of the bourgeois society. In the author’s point of view, the escapism (the desire to escape reality by submerging into a fictional world) and the violence are the major diseases of the present. These diseases would be cured when mankind goes back to the “spirit of the holiday”, because mankind “has the ability to say “yes” to life and “no” to the social injustice.” This kind of treatment in the Western societies commences under the influence of “holiday” movements like the hippie movement (embodying the immediate perception of the world and the mystical contemplation, as well as establishing its own rituals) and the “new left movement” (successors of the social dreamers and the utopian radicals of the past; their gatherings -often turning into violence – regenerate the spirit of the holiday fantasies and the excess).

THE research of the holiday corresponds to history, ethnic and religious appurtenance of its bearers together with the peculiarities of their culture. The examining of this cultural phenomenon in the Bulgarian sources remains within the frameworks of this concept. That’s why mostly ethnographers, students of folklore, philologists, and historians deal with it without going beyond their own scientific and research fields and without seeking conceptual explanations. Their major contribution lies in the presentation of a unique and original pattern outlining the specifics of the holiday and ritual culture in Bulgarian; in the periodization and the division of typical holidays of the national calendar and their examination within the framework of national reticence; and in the studying of their similarities with other ritual and spectacle forms. Bulgarian scientists and researchers create volumetric works on the national mass holidays; however, they do not draw a general theory. In these works the empirical analysis of various holidays is emphasized, they thoroughly examine different kinds of rituals and traditions in their full coloring and diversity, but they are void of profound philosophic analysis – the pragmatic beginning and the portrayal are given priority. Despite that, their

value must not be disregarded – they collect huge material of facts that is needed for the clear and thorough examining of various holidays.

AS a matter of fact, the opportunity for creating a universal theory of the holiday had long been rejected due to the complex character of the matter. The quotations above do not exhaust all various scientific methods of approach towards the research of the holiday culture, but they set forth the basic theoretic paradigms outlining the important aspects of the phenomenon and trace their manifestation and evolution.

WHEN we acknowledge the high scientific worth of the researches, one must point out, that the conclusions and the settings of the aforementioned concepts require further development in theoretic and practice aspects. A number of theoretic statements need to be rectified with a view to the occurred social changes and the advance in culture of the mass holidays as a specific form of social communication. It is imperative to re-examine the intrinsic processes characteristic to those holidays in the context of the social process, peculiar to the modern society.

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